

HAND-BOOKS FOR  
BIBLE CLASSES  
AND PRIVATE STUDENTS

ST. MATTHEW'S GOSPEL

WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

*Rev. Edward E. Anderson, M.A.*

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The gospel according to St.  
Matthew



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Handbooks for Bible Classes and  
Private Students\*

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ST. MATTHEW

BY REV. EDWARD E. ANDERSON, M.A.

*For Lists of the Series see end of this Volume*



# THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO S T. M A T T H E W

With Introduction and Notes

BY

REV. EDWARD E. ANDERSON, M.A.

EAST KILBRIDE



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# THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MATTHEW.



## INTRODUCTION.

### I.

#### THE SOURCES OF THE FIRST GOSPEL.

##### (1) THE GOSPEL OF MARK.

It is now beyond all reasonable doubt that Mark is the earliest Gospel, and that it was used by Matthew and Luke as the basis of their Gospels. The editor of the First Gospel, whom for the sake of brevity we shall call Matthew, reserving St. Matthew for the designation of the Apostle, uses Mark with considerable freedom. He shortens and expands and, particularly in the earlier chapters, rearranges Mark's narrative to suit his special purpose; but those alterations are relatively quite subordinate. He omits little that is in Mark, and though he frequently changes the order, he follows Mark in the main outline of the story. Though he is not a slavish copyist, the verbal agreement in what is common to them is very much greater than the divergence.

There is a tradition attested by Papias, who lived in the early years of the second century, that Mark's Gospel embodies the memoirs of St. Peter. An Elder, who was an immediate disciple of Jesus, informed Papias that "Mark, having become the interpreter of Peter, wrote down accurately everything that he remembered."

There is no reason to question this tradition. Mark's Gospel is thus to be held as embodying the preaching of the Apostle Peter, and, since it forms the framework of Matthew, we have the ultimate authority of St. Peter for the historicity of the main narrative of the First Gospel, covering the public life of Jesus.

(2) THE LOGIA OF ST. MATTHEW, OR THE SOURCE  
COMMONLY CALLED Q.

Within the framework supplied by Mark, Matthew inserts discourses and sayings of Jesus unrecorded by Mark. Most of these, though by no means all of them, are found also in Luke. The verbal agreement between Matthew and Luke in the Sayings common to both is very great, but there are remarkable variations, and frequently the order and the setting of the Sayings are quite different. The Sayings of the Sermon on the Mount, for example, are spread over Luke, chaps. vi., xi.-xvi. The Lord's Prayer, set by Matthew in that Sermon, appears in a somewhat different form in Luke, and is placed (Luke xi. 1) in an altogether different setting. While there are nine Beatitudes in Matt. v. 3-12, there are only four in Luke vi. 20-23, and their form is different, while Luke adds corresponding woes.

The agreement between Matthew and Luke in this common material is accounted for by the prevailing theory that both had access to a written collection of Logia or Sayings of our Lord, the source commonly called Q. This has been further identified with the collection of Logia which Papias says St. Matthew compiled. "Matthew then," says Papias, "compiled the Logia in Hebrew (=Aramaic) speech, and every man interpreted them as he could." Professor Burkitt conjectures, indeed, that what Papias refers to was a collection of Messianic proof-texts from the Old Testament, but this view seems an eccentricity. The prevailing opinion that it was Sayings of our Lord is the natural meaning of Papias' words.

It may be taken as a practical certainty that a written source, Q, lies behind this matter common to Matthew and Luke, and its identification with the Logia of St. Matthew is in the highest degree

probable. The Sayings of our Lord were first indeed known through the preaching of His disciples, passed from mouth to mouth, were carefully taught the new converts, and acquired their growing fixity of expression in the course of this oral tradition. But Luke in his preface definitely states that many writings were in existence when he set himself to compose his Gospel. It is only in keeping with this historical trend to assume that Matthew also was not wholly dependent on oral tradition. The needs of the Christian life, the desire of Christians to know the words of our Lord which formed for them the new rule of life, the catechetical instruction of the converts, would call such writings early into existence.

But the variation of the Sayings in Matthew and Luke seems best explained by the assumption that they had before them different forms of Q. The difference in the order of the Sayings can indeed be accounted for by Matthew's habit of grouping his material. Under the exigencies of preaching and of catechetical instruction, the Sayings tended to be gathered around a common theme. This grouping of the Sayings around a nucleus is seen in Luke as well as in Matthew. But Luke tells us in his preface (Luke i. 3) that his aim was to write his narrative "in order." We see that he did carefully follow the relative order of events in Mark, and we are justified in supposing that this accurate historian did the same with any other document he used, so far as that was possible, in inserting new matter into Mark's general scheme. It is also clear that Matthew was not actuated to the same degree as Luke by the desire to place the Sayings in the connection in which he found them, though at times he did so. He has brought together Sayings whose only connection is the similarity of their subject-matter. The order and the setting of the Sayings, as they were arranged in the primitive source Q, will accordingly be better preserved in Luke than in Matthew.

But while the difference in the order and the setting of these Sayings can be accounted for by Matthew's habit of grouping, we find it difficult to explain the divergence in language on the theory of their both using the same identical document. Matthew does indeed change the words of our Lord recorded by Mark, but the changes

are rarely of great importance. He will naturally have made similar alterations in the Logian Sayings, but the number and nature of these changes, as compared with Luke's version, do not seem satisfactorily explained solely by his editorial revision.

The name of the First Gospel indicates a close connection between it and the Apostle St. Matthew. It is natural to suppose that it embodies the Sayings of our Lord, compiled by St. Matthew according to the Papias tradition. This work was written by St. Matthew in Aramaic; but it was probably a Greek translation of this work which the editor of the First Gospel used. Professor Wellhausen supposes that the two evangelists had access to the Aramaic original as well as to a Greek translation of it. This would help to explain the divergence of language in Matthew and Luke, but that would be equally well accounted for if they simply used different translations of the Aramaic original. The difference, however, between the Beatitudes, for example, in Matthew and Luke cannot be explained by a mere difference of translation, nor can it be sufficiently accounted for by the editorial work of the First Evangelist. If we hold to the assumption that the Aramaic original of St. Matthew underlies Matthew and Luke, it would seem necessary to suppose that it reached their hands in different forms. Luke's version of the Beatitudes has the appearance of being nearer the original form. In Matthew, though not essentially changed, they seem modified to make their spirituality clear, they are supplemented by O.T. passages, and rounded off with artistic completeness. The difference also makes it improbable that Luke had the First Gospel in his hands. It is unlikely that the editor of the First Gospel would so modify the form of the Beatitudes, or Luke so curtail and alter them, on their own authority. It seems best, therefore, to suppose that they had before them varying forms of a common ultimate written source, Q.

It is a disputed point whether Q was a mere collection of Sayings, or whether it included a certain amount of narrative. The latter view is more probable, in view of the distribution and setting of the Sayings in Luke, and of the necessity for an historical introduction to make some of the Sayings intelligible. But if so, the

narrative would not be extensive. There is not enough of narrative common to Matthew and Luke to make up such a continuous story as could be called a Gospel. Professor Burkitt thinks that it did contain an account of the Passion because there is found in Luke xxii. matter which comes from this source. But though it contained towards its close an incident that happened and a Saying that was spoken during the Passion, that is not enough to show that it gave a full account of the death of our Lord.

### (3) NON-MARCAN NARRATIVE PECULIAR TO MATTHEW AND LUKE.

There is a certain amount of non-Markan narrative common to Matthew and Luke, such as the story of the Baptist, the Temptation, and the Centurion's Servant. This may have come from Q, or from some other written source. Luke's preface is evidence that he at least had several writings before him. Professor Harnack, who believes in the common use of Q by Matthew and Luke, does not doubt that much of the matter common to them may come from another source. Nor must it be forgotten that, to some comparatively slight extent probably, the source from which they drew material common to both would be the living oral tradition.

### (4) A COLLECTION OF MESSIANIC PROOF-TEXTS.

There is a number of quotations from the O.T. introduced by the formula, "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through the prophet." They are based on the Hebrew text. The evangelist, however, when he incorporates Mark's O.T. quotations assimilates them towards the Greek Bible, the LXX. He was therefore familiar with the LXX, and it would indeed be very peculiar if, in writing a Greek Gospel for a Greek-speaking audience, he should use the Hebrew and not the Greek Bible, which would be familiar to them. It is therefore supposed that Matthew had before him a collection of Messianic proof-texts based on the Hebrew text. It was the first work of the Early Church to prove that Jesus was the Messiah

of the O.T. Several such collections of Messianic "Testimonies" do exist, and it is from such a collection that the Latin Fathers quote Scripture. It is inferred from its use of the Hebrew Bible, and from Matt. ii. 23, that this collection of "Testimonies" had a Palestinian origin. For only in Palestine would the Hebrew Bible be known, and it was there that "Nazarene" was a term of reproach used against the Christians.

#### (5) MATTER PECULIAR TO MATTHEW.

There is also found in Matthew matter peculiar to himself, a considerable number of Sayings of our Lord scattered all through his Gospel, an occasional piece of narrative, and in the chapters of the Infancy and the Resurrection certain traditions that have a Palestinian origin. These were probably derived from oral tradition, though some of them may have been found in a written source. Sayings of our Lord continued to float on in the oral tradition, and appear outside the Gospels (Acts xx. 35 ; 1 Cor. ix. 14) and outside the N.T. literature. The stories of the guard at the tomb, and of the resurrection of dead saints, appear in a still more developed form in the apocryphal Gospel according to the Hebrews, and do not stand on the same historical level as the main narrative ; they have crept in from that borderland which separates our canonical Gospels, which are based on facts, from the apocryphal Gospels, in which history is buried in fanciful legend. It must be carefully noted, however, that these stories do not affect the question of the Resurrection, which, like the Virgin Birth, is not peculiar to Matthew.

## II.

### THE EVANGELIST.

The name of the evangelist is unknown. His Gospel has come down to us named after St. Matthew the Apostle, whose Logia it embodies. St. Matthew's own work will have ceased to exist as a separate book, just because all that was vital in it has been

absorbed by the First Gospel, so that the First Gospel is distinctively the Gospel according to St. Matthew. But though his name is unknown, something of him is revealed in the Gospel he composed.

*The Aim of the Evangelist.*

Matthew, like all the evangelists, wrote to awaken faith in Jesus, and still more to confirm and enlighten the faith of those who already believed: not to give a scientific history of Jesus. They all preach Christ. They are not mere recorders of facts. They seek to present Christ to faith. This aim is least conspicuous in Mark, whose Gospel is the most objective of them all. It dominates the Fourth Gospel. Matthew in this respect occupies an intermediate position.

It is to be carefully noted, however, that the editor of the First Gospel does not invent his facts. He keeps firmly to what he has found in his written sources and in the oral tradition. The acceptance of his Gospel by the Church, which rejected a multitude of others, means not only that he has expressed her faith, but also that he has recorded what she believed to be the facts.

Besides the aim Matthew has in common with all the evangelists, he has a special aim of his own. He wrote his Gospel from a special point of view, and so arranged the sayings and deeds of our Lord that they might produce on the minds of his readers a certain impression. He writes to produce the conviction that Jesus is the Messiah, in whom the prophetic anticipations of Israel are fulfilled, and through whom the promised kingdom of God will come. It is the Personality of Jesus which in all the Gospels commands attention and gives supreme value and authority to His words and works, as these reversely are the revelation of His unique Personality. But while His life is in Mark its own witness, and His miracles are the outflow of His love and compassion, to Matthew the correspondence of the events to the O.T. prophecies is also the witness to His Messiahship, as Matthew is careful to point out, and the miracles are also exhibitions of power which prove that He is the Messiah.

Writing his Gospel with this aim in view—to awaken and strengthen the conviction that Jesus is the Messiah—he is not greatly

concerned about the chronological order of events, though he follows the main sequence of events as that is outlined by Mark.

### *The Method of the Evangelist.*

His method is to group the words and deeds of Jesus in masses, so that the revelation of His impressive teaching, and of His startling and beneficent power, may have full weight in producing the conviction of His Messiahship. Thus at the beginning of his Gospel he gives a long, impressive sermon covering three chapters (v.-vii.), followed by a group of striking deeds extending over two chapters (viii.-ix). So in chap. xiii. we have a series of parables. This method of grouping his material is specially characteristic of the earlier portion of his Gospel (v.-xiii.). From chap. xiv. he follows closely the order of Mark.

A marked feature of his Gospel is his predilection for the number seven, and especially for the number three (cf. n. on i. 17).

### *The Attitude of the Evangelist.*

The evangelist may fairly be said to occupy the standpoint of the Early Jewish Christian Church. To that Church Christianity was rather a purified and perfected Judaism than a new religion. The acceptance of Jesus as the Messiah was the vital element in their creed, which distinguished them from the rest of their fellow-countrymen, and roused the bitter opposition of the Pharisees, against whose attack they had to defend their faith. But they still regarded the Mosaic Law as permanently binding, and found great difficulty in the admission of Gentiles who were not prepared to accept the Mosaic Law *in toto*. This strongly conservative Church held tenaciously to the historical facts of Jesus' life, and to it we owe the immeasurable debt of having carefully preserved the sayings and deeds of our Lord.

The First Gospel arose within this Jewish Christian atmosphere. The Gentiles are indeed called to the kingdom (viii. 5-12), but the abiding validity of the Mosaic Law is strongly insisted on (v. 17, 18), even of the Pharisaic teaching (xxiii. 3). It is the practice divorced from the teaching and the motives of the Pharisees which are con-



demned (xxiii. 5-7). It is the most anti-Pharisaic of the three Gospels. Contrast Mark xii. 37-40 with Matt. xxiii. But the whole Gospel is pervaded with this anti-Pharisaic spirit. The Jewish phraseology of the Gospel is also marked (cf. the Kingdom of the Heavens (*passim*), Raca (v. 22), every scribe (xiii. 52), etc.). This is largely to be explained by the Jewish Christian character of the sources on which he drew, but the evangelist has accentuated the anti-Pharisaic note in Mark, and this, coupled with the fact that he leaves the Jewish phrases unexplained, points to the conclusion that he was a Jewish Christian writing to Jewish Christians.

It is clear, indeed, from xxviii. 19, 20, that the evangelist believed in the universal destination of the Gospel. While we may reasonably infer that his standpoint was that of undeveloped early Jewish Christianity, he has faithfully embodied the Sayings of Jesus whether he understood their full implication or not. The Sayings which seem to limit the Gospel to Israel (cf. x. 6, xv. 24) are due to the original historical conditions which confined the personal mission of Jesus to Israel. But throughout the book the universalism of the Gospel is rather implicit and undeveloped than clearly enunciated. Jesus is the Messiah of the Jews. Gentiles are invited to come, and the Jews indeed, though the natural heirs of the kingdom, will be cast out. Not Jewish nationality, however, nor the assumption of it on the part of Gentiles, but faith in Jesus as the Messiah, and a character corresponding with the requirements of Jesus, are the conditions of admission. But the limits of Judaism are not yet clearly burst. The Mosaic Law still remains, purified and extended but not superseded. On the question of divorce we have even a retreat from its absolute prohibition in Mark x. 2-12 to the Mosaic position, Matt. v. 32, xix. 9. But the Gospel which in the Sermon on the Mount so insists on the ethicising of religion on the one hand, and on the other will have no compromise with materialism; which makes faith in the Unseen the foundation of life, and yet holds all faith a sham that does not result in the faithful discharge of duty; which demands the practical realisation of the brotherhood of man, but bases it not on physical unity nor, like the Stoics, on the unity of Reason, but on the Fatherhood of God and on a moral and spiritual disposition like God's;

which makes the life of pure love the perfect life, and character the decisive test of entrance into the consummated kingdom of God, while entrance into it in its present preparatory stage is purely religious, free to all without any moral conditions, requiring only a heart receptive of the gospel of love—such a Gospel is universal to its core, the Word of God to all humanity for all time, in all stages of culture and of civilisation. The angel with the flaming sword guards the gates of the kingdom, but the gates are thrown wide open as humanity, and the fire does not hurt him who would enter in with a heart that sincerely loves God his Father, and man his brother, and seeks to do His holy will.

### III.

#### THE HISTORICAL TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE FIRST GOSPEL.

The value of the Gospel as an account of the actual life, words, and deeds of Jesus depends on the value of the sources on which the evangelist drew. We have seen that the main body of the narrative rests on the ultimate authority of St. Peter through Mark, and the majority of the Sayings on the authority of St. Matthew. Better authority we could not have.

Excluding the one or two dubious elements of the tradition, which are of no real importance, there is little reason for distrusting the oral or written tradition which we have no means of directly connecting with an apostle. The evangelic tradition is simply the substance of the teaching of the apostles and of the witnesses of Jesus in the days of His flesh. It grew up under their sanction, and was taught the new converts under the honest belief that the teaching was in accordance with the facts. The Jewish Christian Church, which was the primary repository of the historical facts of Jesus' life, held so rigidly to the facts that their literal fidelity to the practice of Jesus became the greatest obstacle in the way of their progress. Their inability to grasp the meaning of the facts, and to follow the principle and spirit of Jesus at the expense of the letter, left this unprogressive

remnant to a slow death. But their dogged conservatism becomes to an age of doubt a strong assurance of the historicity of the facts.

The phraseology of our Lord's Sayings underwent to some extent alteration before they acquired fixity of expression. But the essential principles taught by our Lord cannot be held doubtful on that account. It is absurd to suppose that He did not express the same thought in many forms. It was not fixed rules which He came to teach, like the Pharisees, but principles capable of endless adaptation. At the same time, it is foolish to minimise, though we do not need to exaggerate, the retentiveness of memory in these days. The events of Jesus' life were memorable, and His Sayings were simple, startling, and pithy. Instruction was oral then, and that does strengthen the memory. Besides, there is no reason for supposing that none of His Sayings had been written down at a very early period. We know that writings did exist before our canonical Gospels. Slighter writings may well have preceded these. The need existed, and it was a literary age.

Variations in language and in the minor details of the narrative are of no real consequence for the main issue. The spirit of Jesus, the principles of His teaching, which aroused such deadly opposition, and the lines along which He worked, are indubitably preserved, attest themselves, and are exemplified in the portrait depicted in the Gospel. This is what the evangelist seeks to give us, and this is all we ask of history for our religious needs.

But while the evangelist follows his sources closely, he makes certain changes under the influence of the age and circle in which he lived. Christian experience was deepening, and more exalted conceptions of Christ were dawning. This growing reverence for our Lord has led the first evangelist to omit almost all Mark's descriptions of Jesus' human emotions, like anger (Mark iii. 5 = Matt. xii. 13), wonder (Mark vi. 6 = Matt. xiii. 58), sighing deeply (Mark viii. 12 = Matt. xvi. 4). He omits also questions put by Jesus which seem to imply ignorance (Mark v. 30 = Matt. ix. 22; Mark vi. 38 = Matt. xiv. 16, 17), statements which express limits to Jesus' power (Mark vi. 5 = Matt. xiii. 58). So far Matthew makes Jesus less human and less historical than we find Him in Mark.

Under the same feeling of the transcendence of Jesus, he heightens the miraculousness of a miracle. The fig tree, which in Mark (xi. 20, 21) is found withered the day after it was cursed, withers away *immediately* (Matt. xxi. 19, 20). While Mark (i. 32, 33) says that they brought unto Him *all* that were diseased and He healed *many*, Matthew (viii. 16) says that they brought *many* and He healed *all*. Perhaps the contrast between "why callest thou me good?" (Mark x. 18) and "why dost thou ask me about the good?" (Matt. xix. 17) is also due to this feeling of reverence.

In the same way also reverence for the disciples makes him tone down or omit expressions which cast reproach upon them or attribute ignorance to them. Matthew (xiii. 16), *e.g.*, omits "Do ye not know this parable?" (Mark iv. 13), and inserts "blessed are your eyes, for they see." "And they understood not the saying, and were afraid to ask him" (Mark ix. 32) is toned down to "And they were grieved" (Matt. xvii. 23). In Matt. xx. 20 the request which in Mark x. 35 is made by James and John, is made by their mother.

Such modifications of Mark, affecting Jesus and the disciples, are too frequent and too consistent to be accidental. Though not of great importance, they make the portraiture of Matthew somewhat less historical than Mark's narrative. In Matt. iii. 14, 15 we have what seems to be an anachronism. Other examples are more debatable; but these are enough to show that the faith and questions of the Early Church have to a slight extent influenced the First Gospel. Making all due allowance for that, however, the picture given is overwhelmingly objective. It must also never be forgotten that the primary purpose of the evangelist is to present Christ to faith as the revelation of God and of the way to Him, to teach us what to believe concerning God, and what to do and be in order that our relations to God and to our fellow-men may be perfectly adjusted. However much the evangelist may cling to the Historical Christ as the norm and ideal of life, to him as to the early Christians Christianity is a life, a fellowship, a redemption, a hope. No written word, no rule, however carefully formulated, can take the place of the guidance of the Living Christ and of living fellowship with Him. There is ultimately no true religion except the

religion of the Spirit and of life, nor any vital faith which brings us into personal touch with the Living God, except what comes from living conviction and experience, from the Voice and the Presence within us.

#### IV.

#### THE DATE OF THE FIRST GOSPEL.

As Matthew used Mark, the date of Matthew cannot be earlier than 65-75 A.D., within which period Mark is generally held to have been written. According to Irenæus also the date of St. Matthew's Logia is 60-65 A.D. or thereabout. The destruction of Jerusalem, which took place 70 A.D., seems clearly referred to in passages like xxii. 7, xxiv. 29, and the Second Coming of Christ is closely identified with the fall of the city (xxiv. 30).

It is hardly probable that Matthew was written before the destruction of the city, though one or two would date it as early as 68 A.D. But it is reasonable to argue that, as the Return of Christ did not take place according to expectation, the evangelist would not have left so definite a prophecy as xxiv. 30 unmodified if he had written long after 70 A.D. It cannot be later than the end of the first century, as it was written before the Fourth Gospel.

We may therefore date it 75-90 A.D., and as there is nothing in the Gospel which can be said to reflect a late period of the Church's history, we may believe it was written nearer 75 than 90 A.D.

#### V.

#### THE LIFE OF ST. MATTHEW.

Only a few facts are known with regard to St. Matthew, whose collection of the Sayings of our Lord is embodied in the First Gospel. He was not one of the earliest disciples, nor is there any indication that he was, like the first six disciples, a disciple of the Baptist before becoming a disciple of Jesus. He is placed seventh in the list of the apostles in Mark and Luke, eighth in Matthew and

Acts. This position in the list probably indicates his importance in the group.

He was a publican, *i.e.* a custom-house official (Matt. ix. 9, x. 3), stationed at Capernaum, which lay on the important caravan route between Syria and Egypt, on the frontier of the dominion of Herod Antipas, for whom the customs were levied. He is identified with "Levi, the son of Alphæus" (Mark ii. 14 ; Luke v. 27) in Matt. ix. 9. Matthew, which probably means "Jehovah's gift," was in all likelihood the name given him after his call, as Simon was called Cephas (Peter), and by this name he was known among the Christians.

As a publican he belonged to the class of social outcasts (cf. n. on v. 46), and apart from the question of his personal fitness he would be chosen by Jesus to represent this class in the apostleship, to give Him access to them and to assert the universal nature of the gospel against all Pharisaic restrictions. It may be inferred from the feast which he gave in honour of Jesus on the occasion of his call, and from the importance of the custom-house of Capernaum, that he gave up a lucrative position to follow Jesus.

Traditions, which cannot be relied on, state that he visited Ethiopia, Media, Parthia, and Persia. It is expressly declared by Heracleon that he did not suffer martyrdom.

## GENERAL PLAN OF THE GOSPEL

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I. THE NATIVITY OF THE MESSIAH . . . . .	i.-ii.
II. PREPARATION FOR THE MESSIAH'S MINISTRY . . . . .	iii.-iv. 11
III. THE MESSIAH'S MINISTRY IN GALILEE. . . . .	iv. 12-xv. 20
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3. A group of striking deeds revealing His Power and Spirit . . . . .	viii.-ix. 34
4. The spread of His Message through the Mission of the Twelve . . . . .	ix. 35-x.
5. The Messiah's reflection on His Ministry . . . . .	xi.
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VI. THE LAST DAYS . . . . .	xxi.-xxvii.
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VII. THE RESURRECTION . . . . .	xxviii.





# THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MATTHEW.

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## I.-II. THE NATIVITY OF THE MESSIAH.

### I. 1-17. THE GENEALOGY OF JESUS CHRIST.

<sup>1</sup> THE book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of  
<sup>2</sup> David, the son of Abraham. Abraham begat Isaac ; and Isaac begat Jacob ; and Jacob begat Judas and his brethren ;

Ver. 1. *The book of the generation*—the genealogical register of Jesus Christ. The expression is taken from Gen. ii. 4a, v. 1 LXX. It is the title not of the whole Gospel but of vers. 2-16.

*Jesus Christ.* The Christ (=the Messiah, the Anointed, *sc.* of the Lord) was the name given during the Greco-Roman period, probably since Dan. ix. 25, to the expected King in whom the O.T. prophecies regarding the kingdom of God should be fulfilled. The anointing of a king symbolised his appointment by God to the office. It was an essential element in the idea of the Messiah that He should be appointed by God and not self-nominated. The word Christ throughout the Gospel always describes the Messianic rank and dignity, but here and in vv. 16, 17, 18 it has become a proper name, the surname of Jesus.

*the son of David.* A popular designation of the Messiah based on the promise made in 2 Sam. vii. 12. It is to trace the Davidic descent of Jesus, and thus substantiate the claim that He is the Messiah, that the genealogy has been constructed. But *the son of Abraham* is added because he was the father of Israel, to whom the promise, treated as Messianic, was made, "in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" (Gen. xxii. 18). Matthew does not go back to Adam like Luke, who wished to show that Jesus was King of humanity, but stops at Abraham because his motive is to show that Jesus was the Messiah of the Jews.

Vers. 2-17. THE GENEALOGY.—Ver. 2. *Judas and his brethren.* The descent runs in the line of Judah, but his brothers, whose names the compiler finds given in 1 Chron. ii. 1, which he probably used,

3 and Judas begat Phares and Zara of Thamar; and Phares  
 4 begat Esrom; and Esrom begat Aram; and Aram begat  
 Aminadab; and Aminadab begat Naasson; and Naasson  
 5 begat Salmon; and Salmon begat Booz of Rachab; and  
 6 Booz begat Obed of Ruth; and Obed begat Jesse; and  
 Jesse begat David the king; and David the king begat  
 7 Solomon of her that had been the wife of Urias; and  
 Solomon begat Roboam; and Roboam begat Abia; and  
 8 Abia begat Asa; and Asa begat Josaphat; and Josaphat  
 9 begat Joram; and Joram begat Ozias; and Ozias begat  
 Joatham; and Joatham begat Achaz; and Achaz begat  
 10 Ezekias; and Ezekias begat Manasses; and Manasses begat  
 11 Amon; and Amon begat Josias; and Josias begat Jechonias  
 and his brethren, about the time they were carried away to

are mentioned to indicate that Christ belonged to the whole race sprung from Jacob.

Ver. 3. *Phares and Zara*. Zara may be mentioned because, according to Gen. xxxviii. 27-30, it was contrary to human expectation that Phares should be the first-born, and Matthew would thus prepare his readers for the special intervention of God, where the Messiah is concerned. *of Thamar*. It is quite exceptional to mention the mother in a genealogy. Rahab, Ruth, and Bathsheba also occur. Matthew probably looks upon them as "types of Mary," because of the extraordinary way in which they became agents in the line of descent. Others think of the grace of God towards these sinful or miserable women as meant to suggest the grace that was to appear in Christ. Jewish Christians, who would exclude Gentiles, will also be rebuked.

Ver. 5. *Rachab*. Matthew strangely makes Rahab the wife of Salmon. Some three or four hundred years intervened between Joshua and David.

Ver. 6. *David the king*. The title is here mentioned because it was to the Davidic kingship the Messianic promise was specifically attached. David's reign was looked on as Israel's golden age, which the Messiah was expected to restore.

Ver. 8. *Joram begat Ozias*. Between Joram and Ozias (= Ahaziah in LXX) three kings are omitted, Joash, Amaziah, and Azariah (= Uzziah). The omission is due to the unwonted use of Ozias for Ahaziah in the LXX of 1 Chron. iii. 11. It usually stands for Uzziah, for which Matthew may have taken it, thus slipping over the three names. At the same time he would not otherwise have got the number fourteen, and may have intentionally omitted them.

Ver. 11. *Josias . . . brethren*. Jechonias (= Jehoiachin) was the son of Jehoiakim and grandson of Josias, and had no brothers. But as there are only thirteen names in this third division, while there must have been fourteen to Matthew, the text must be corrupt. Jechonias is probably a copyist's error for Jehoiakim. The names were

- 12 Babylon : and after they were brought to Babylon, Jechonias  
 13 begat Salathiel; and Salathiel begat Zorobabel; and  
 Zorobabel begat Abiud; and Abiud begat Eliakim; and  
 14 Eliakim begat Azor; and Azor begat Sadoc; and Sadoc  
 15 begat Achim; and Achim begat Eliud; and Eliud begat  
 Eleazar; and Eleazar begat Matthan; and Matthan begat  
 16 Jacob; and Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of

easily confused, as is seen even in 2 Chron. xxxvi. 10, where Zedekiah is wrongly called Jehoiachin's brother. The brothers of Jehoiakim may be mentioned simply because Matthew is embodying 1 Chron. iii. 15, where they happened to be named.

Vers. 12-16. *Salathiel . . . Zorobabel.* So the LXX, though not the Heb., in 1 Chron. iii. 19. Up to this point the genealogy has followed 1 Chron. ii. 1, 4-15, and 1 Chron. iii. 10-17 in the LXX. It now follows some unknown source. The names following probably rest on family tradition. The honour of Davidic descent would tend to make the Davidic families tenacious of their pedigree, but that is hardly sufficient to ensure accuracy over the lapse of centuries for those families which, like David's, had sunk into obscurity. Of public registers, except in the case of priestly families, there is no evidence. But Jesus' Davidic descent was never questioned by His contemporaries. Joseph's House must therefore have been recognised as a Davidic House, and we have consequently no reason to doubt the tradition. But Jesus never appealed to it, and from Matt. xxii. 45 it is clear that He laid no weight on such descent.

*the husband . . . Jesus.* This is a circumlocution to avoid the misunderstanding which would be produced by saying Joseph begat Jesus. There are peculiarities, however, in the readings of certain MSS which make it not impossible that the original was something like "Joseph, to whom Mary a virgin was betrothed, begat Jesus." But even so, the relative clause makes it clear that begat is not meant in the sense of paternity. Besides, the probability is on the side of the assumption that the genealogy was constructed by the editor of the Gospel, who believed in the Virgin Birth. It is arranged in three groups of fourteen, and through the whole Gospel groups of three are peculiarly beloved. Even though he found a genealogy of Joseph to hand, the introduction of the women is due to him, and seems clearly to be motived by the Virgin Birth (cf. n. on ver. 3), and is even probably meant as an apologetic against the Jewish slander that Jesus was the natural son of Joseph and Mary—a slander which only arose after the knowledge of the Virgin Birth became common property.

The genealogy is the genealogy of Joseph, as also is Luke's, and only male descent could, according to the ideas of that age, confer birthright. But Joseph is regarded not as the actual but as the legal father of Jesus. By Jewish law, Joseph's recognition of Mary's child conferred upon him all the legal rights of a son of his

- 17 whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ. So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David until the carrying away into Babylon are fourteen generations; and from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ are fourteen generations.

own. He would be Joseph's heir and called Joseph's son, and, if the fact of His birth were known, He would be considered as bestowed by God on the House of Joseph. It was the aim of the editor to make this clear, and if the original reading was as stated above, it was subsequently modified not to change the original meaning but to prevent any possible misunderstanding of it.

*who is called Christ*=Messiah. Called does not imply any doubt but states a fact. Cf. Simon called Peter, iv. 18.

Ver. 17. Three groups of fourteen. It was a Jewish fancy to see significance in the numbers 3 and 7 and multiples. Cf. 3 temptations, iv. 1-11; 3 parables of sowing, xiii. 1-32; 3 questions, xxii. 15-40; 3 prayers in Gethsemane, xxvi. 39-44; 7 times forgiveness, xviii. 21, 22; seven brethren, xxii. 25, etc. etc. The number 3 in particular pervades the Gospel. The arrangement here,  $3 \times 14$ , may be suggested by the name David, in Hebrew דָּוִד, in which there are 3 letters whose numerical value is  $4+6+4=14$ . Notice also that in David the family rose to kingship, lost it at the Exile, is now restored to it in Christ.

## I. 18-25. THE VIRGIN BIRTH.

- 18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.  
19 Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away

The Nativity is described from the side of Joseph, but it does not rest necessarily nor probably on Joseph's own account thereof.

Ver. 18. *the birth*—more general "the origin," as in ver. 1. *of Jesus Christ*—better "of the Christ." *before . . . together*—"before they came to live together in the same house." *of the Holy Ghost—Holy* because the Spirit is God's. Here the Holy Spirit means the active creative energy of God, not yet probably in the later personal sense. Cf. Gen. i. 2. This explanation is not yet known to Joseph. To him it is a painful discovery.

Ver. 19. *her husband*—not yet in fact, but so regarded legally, a betrothal being legally binding and only dissolvable, as a marriage, by divorce. *just man*—a God-fearing man who strictly respects the law. Some take it in the rare sense of kindly, but that is not the natural sense of the word and does not give the reason why he felt compelled to separate from her. *and*—"and yet," a common usage

20 privily. But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy  
 21 Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their  
 22 sins. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which  
 23 was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and

in Greek, and particularly in Hebrew. *not willing*—because of his love. A bill of divorcement was necessary to make the divorce legal. Ordinarily this was given in public before the authorities. He resolved to make a private arrangement. Probably he would give her the bill of divorcement without informing the authorities, as a mere oral agreement would not have been a legal divorce. He was probably stretching the law to its utmost. So strong was his love—the spirit of Jesus' home.

Ver. 20. *dream*. Probably he was dreaming about this painful situation, and in the course of his dream, forming part of it, an angel appeared and spoke.

*thou . . . David*—thus addressed on the principle of *noblesse oblige*. A son of David should be bold in faith and expect strange things, remembering the great promise made to David's house. *to take . . . wife*=to take Mary to thy house, which was regarded as the completion of the marriage begun in the betrothal. His betrothed is called his wife (cf. ver. 19). *Holy* is in the Greek emphatic.

Ver. 21. The form of expression is reminiscent of Gen. xvii. 19 LXX, and suggests perhaps the exceptional in Isaac's birth also. There was a Jewish idea that Isaac was God-created. *thou . . . call*. A command assuming obedience. *Jesus*=Joshua, later Jeshua, "Jehovah is salvation." It does not of itself mean that Jesus is Jehovah, but that He brings with Him Jehovah's salvation. *his people*=Israel. Salvation was originally promised to Israel as God's special gift to them, and Jesus' personal mission was primarily to Israel (cf. xv. 24). *from . . . sins*. The salvation is to be spiritual, not political-material, as was popularly expected.

Ver. 22. *was done*—"came to pass." *that . . . fulfilled*—not that the event was arranged simply to suit the prophecy, but the evangelist identifies the purpose of God with the prophecy. Consequently, while we should say the event was designed to fulfil the purpose of God expressed in the prophecy, he views the event as happening in order to fulfil the prophecy. *of the Lord by the prophet*—"by the Lord through the prophet." The Lord is the speaker, the prophet the medium. So always, ii. 5, 15, etc.

Ver. 23. *a virgin*—"the virgin." Isa. vii. 14 LXX. There is

they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted  
 24 is, God with us. Then Joseph being raised from sleep did  
 as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him  
 25 his wife: and knew her not till she had brought forth her  
 firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS.

little doubt that Isaiah has in view the birth of the Messiah, but it is doubtful if he thinks of a virgin birth. He speaks of "the young woman," and though the word seems elsewhere to mean a young unmarried woman, it need not necessarily mean that she is a virgin when she is with child. Besides, in Isa. vii. 14 the significance of the prophecy lies in the child, not in His manner of birth. At the same time, Isaiah's mention of the mother, and especially the word in which he describes her, seems to suggest something noteworthy about her, and the LXX, which Matthew follows, took the word to mean a virgin. It has carefully to be observed, however, that the Jews did not expect the Messiah to be born of a virgin. Consequently, Isa. vii. 14 could not have given rise, as some allege, to the idea of the Virgin Birth. The Virgin Birth was first believed in, and then Isaiah's words were taken to be a prophecy of it.

*Emmanuel* (=God with us) meant that the child would bring with Him the presence of God. It would not convey to Isaiah's contemporaries the idea of an incarnation of God. Still the name by which He is subsequently called, Isa. ix. 6 (cf. especially Hero-God, Father-everlasting), seems too high for a mere man, especially when we remember how intensely monotheistic Isaiah was. The Evangelist, however, will take it to mean an incarnation of God.

Ver. 25. This naturally implies that there were other children by Joseph (cf. xii. 46, xiii. 55, 56), though we must read *a*, and not *her first born*, which comes from Luke 2<sup>7</sup>.

## II. 1-12. THE VISIT OF THE MAGI.

1 Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judæa in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from

Matthew relates incidents from Jesus' infancy which concern Him as the Messiah and are prophetic of His future reception—welcomed by the outside world, threatened with death in His own land.

Ver. 1. *Bethlehem* = House of Bread, so named from the fertility of the district, five miles south of Jerusalem, the home of David, still a prosperous village. *of Judæa*—to distinguish it from Bethlehem of Zebulun, seven miles north-west of Nazareth; or better, because of the connection between the Messiah and Judah (cf. Mic. v. 2; Heb. vii. 14; Rev. v. 5). *Herod the king*. Herod the Great, a foreigner, son of the Edomite, Antipater, appointed King of the Jews

2 the east to Jerusalem, saying, Where is he that is born King  
of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are  
3 come to worship him. When Herod the king had heard  
these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.  
4 And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes  
by the Roman Senate 37 B.C., died 4 B.C. Jesus would therefore be  
born before 4 B.C. The received chronology is a miscalculation.  
*wise . . . east*, probably from Babylon. The Magi are supposed  
to have been originally Medians, a priestly class who were devoted  
to the natural sciences, particularly astrology. But the name came  
to be applied to all who busied themselves with such subjects. They  
had considerable knowledge of nature, though there was much  
superstition and jugglery bound up with it. The impression here  
made is that they were sincere seekers. The idea that they were  
kings, and three in number, is purely legendary. Such a visit is not  
in itself incredible. Magi paid a visit to Nero in Italy. There is  
evidence for a later period of widespread Messianic expectations,  
which likely enough existed at this time (cf. Vergil, Eclogue iv.).  
Jews were scattered all through the East, and their expectations  
would be known to Babylonian astrologers, who had long been  
accustomed to make predictions about Canaan.

Ver. 2. *his star*. Some striking astral phenomenon, a new star  
or a conjunction of planets, they connected with the most striking  
event which they thought likely to happen—the coming of the  
Messiah. Cf. Rev. xii. 1, where there are signs in the heavens at  
the coming of the Messiah. A false Messiah, 120 A.D., called him-  
self Bar Cochba (= Son of the Star). It is much more credible that  
there was some phenomenon to account for the story than that it  
arose mythically out of such a prophecy as Num. xxiv 17. If it had,  
we should have expected some reference to Num. xxiv. 17 to betray  
itself. But there may be mythical elements in the details of the  
story, as in ver. 9. In later times there was a great accretion of  
purely fanciful details.

*to worship him*—prostrating themselves before Him with their  
faces to the ground—the Oriental way of paying homage to a king.  
It is not as God that they worship Him, but as Messiah, the King of  
the Jews, who should attain to world-wide empire.

Ver. 3. *was troubled*. The foreign usurper fears a rival king.  
He would be the more sensitive because just at this time he had to  
contend against numerous intrigues within his own family circle.  
*all Jerusalem with him*—a hyperbole, no doubt; but there was a  
strong Herodian party, and Herod was always a good and munificent  
friend to the Jews. In time of famine he gave unstintedly of his  
wealth for relief, while he had also great influence at Rome. But  
their trouble may rather have been fear of an outbreak of Herod's  
temper.

Ver. 4. *the chief priests and scribes*—probably a gathering of  
experts, not a meeting of the Sanhedrin, the supreme council of the

of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ  
 5 should be born. And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of  
 6 Judæa: for thus it is written by the prophet, And thou  
 Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the  
 princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that  
 7 shall rule my people Israel. Then Herod, when he had  
 privily called the wise men, enquired of them diligently what  
 8 time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem,  
 and said, Go and search diligently for the young child; and  
 when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may  
 9 come and worship him also. When they had heard the king,  
 they departed; and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east,  
 went before him, till it came and stood over where the young  
 10 child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with ex-

Jews, as Matthew always adds the elders when he means the Sanhedrin. *chief priests* usually includes the acting High Priest and all who had been High Priests. The scribes were the professional students and expounders of the law. The question proposed to them would be, "Where, according to your sacred writings, is to be the birthplace of the Messiah?"

Ver. 6. Mic. v. 2. The Hebrew is followed, with some deviation from the existing Heb. text. *land of Juda* instead of Ephratah, to assimilate it to vers. 1, 5. Omit *in the. not the least* instead of *the least*, because to Matthew, say some, Bethlehem as the birthplace of the Messiah was by no means insignificant, but the LXX suggests that he is following a different Hebrew text. Instead of *among the thousands* (=families, districts of the tribe) he has *among the princes* (=the heads of the families, districts), by a very slight change of the Hebrew word, a misreading perhaps. *that shall rule* (as a shepherd) *my people Israel* is added to the prophecy from 2 Sam. v. 2. Matthew quotes and treats the O.T. freely, not being bound to the letter.

Vers. 7, 8. Herod holds a private interview with the Magi to find out the length of time since the star was first seen, hoping to discover thereby the age of the Child. *what . . . appeared*, lit. "the time of the star which became and is still visible." Any temporary disappearance of the star seems to be excluded. *worship him also*—his pretended motive.

Vers. 9, 10. Nothing in the narrative supports the idea that they were guided to Jerusalem by the star, nor would it be mentioned now as a striking thing (lo!) that the star went before them, if it had done so since they left the East. They travelled to Palestine because it was there that the Messiah, whose birth the star signified, was to be born, and they found their way like any other travellers. They went to Jerusalem because it was the capital, where information was to be expected. They have to ask it, though the star is still



- 11 ceeding great joy. And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him : and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts ; gold, and  
12 frankincense, and myrrh. And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.

visible (ver. 7), which implies that it does not guide them. Having got the information, they go on to Bethlehem, and, as they proceed,—it is night,—they are surprised to find that the star travels in the sky and stands over where the Child was, *i.e.* Bethlehem, or more naturally the house in Bethlehem where the Child was. This might only mean that the course of the star was in the direction of Bethlehem ; and when they reached it, the star seemed to be vertically above it. When they saw this, they rejoiced, assured that they had reached their goal. But it looks like a fanciful imagination, due to the Magi or the story-teller, to account for their success in identifying the house and the Child.

Ver. 11. *the house*=Joseph's. The narrative in Matthew appears to regard Bethlehem as the original home of Joseph and Mary. Cf. vers. 22, 23. *their treasures*—the chests or bags in which they carried their gifts, the ordinary costly presents made by Orientals. Cf. Isa. lx. 6 ; Ps. xlv. 9. Frankincense and myrrh are aromatic gums, the latter especially costly and used as a perfume and for medicinal purposes. The gifts mean that they regard the child as a king. It is the Oriental custom not to come empty-handed before a prince.

Ver. 12. The Magi would be perplexed whether or not they should obey Herod's instructions, and their troubled thoughts would lead to a troubled dream, which would have been significant to the Magi, who were skilled interpreters of dreams. God speaks to every man in the way most natural to him. *another way*—not *via* Jerusalem, but the quickest way to pass beyond the reach of Herod.

## II. 13-15. THE FLIGHT TO EGYPT.

- 13 And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word : for Herod will seek the

Ver. 13. Immediately after the departure of the Magi. As in i. 20, the dream would arise out of Joseph's anxiety, connected no doubt with the behaviour of the Magi. Egypt was the natural and nearest refuge, as it had been in Israel's earliest days and during

- 14 young child to destroy him. When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into  
 15 Egypt: and was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son.

the struggle with the Greco-Syrian kings. *until . . . word.* One step at a time alone is revealed. Do that and wait.

Ver. 14. He is gone before the morning breaks. Cf. i. 24.

Ver. 15. Jesus was probably born 6 B.C. Herod died 4 B.C. The sojourn in Egypt could not, therefore, have lasted more than two years, and might be much less. *Out of Egypt . . . son.* In Hos. xi. 1 "my son"=Israel. The reference is so plainly to the exodus of Israel that the evangelist could hardly have misunderstood it. But he regards the experience of Israel as typical of the experience of Christ. The history is prophetic as well as a prophet's word. This fanciful application (cf. Hos. xi. 1) seems to show that it was the story of the Flight, which he found among the Palestinian traditions, that suggested a prophetic significance in Hos. xi. 1, and not Hosea's word, which for him created the story.

## II. 16-18. THE MASSACRE OF THE CHILDREN.

- 16 Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time  
 17 which he had diligently enquired of the wise men. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet,  
 18 saying, In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not.

Ver. 16. The star at its rising might be understood as synchronising with the conception of the Child, but Herod reckons on its synchronising with His birth. The Child might then be two years old but not more. The massacre is not mentioned outside the Gospels, but it is in keeping with Herod's character. He murdered every possible rival, even his own wife and children, and his suspiciousness and cruelty increased with age.

Ver. 18. In Jer. xxxi. 15, Rachel, the racial mother of Ephraim and Benjamin, buried near Bethlehem, is conceived, in a picture of singular beauty, as rising up from her tomb to weep over her children as they are gathered at Ramah on their way to exile in Babylon. Ramah was about as far north of Jerusalem as Bethlehem was south. Matthew very freely but very beautifully applies the picture to the weeping mothers of Bethlehem.

## II. 19-21. THE RETURN FROM EGYPT.

19 But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord  
 20 appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, Arise,  
 and take the young child and his mother, and go into the  
 land of Israel; for they are dead which sought the young  
 21 child's life. And he arose, and took the young child and  
 his mother, and came into the land of Israel.

Ver. 19. Herod died of a painful and loathsome disease five days after he had cruelly put his eldest son to death. Joseph no doubt hears of his death, but he has been commanded to wait till he is told to return.

Ver. 20. *they*—Herod alone is meant. The expression comes from Ex. iv. 19, which shows that the life of Moses was looked upon as a parallel. Cf. n. on ver. 23.

## II. 22, 23. THE SETTLEMENT AT NAZARETH.

22 But when he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judæa in  
 the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither:  
 notwithstanding, being warned of God in a dream, he turned  
 23 aside into the parts of Galilee: and he came and dwelt in  
 a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was  
 spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene.

Ver. 22. Herod's kingdom was divided by the Roman Emperor Augustus into four parts and given to Herod's sons. One half—Judæa, Samaria, and Idumæa—was assigned to Archelaus; Galilee and Perea to Antipas; Batanea, Trachonitis, and Auranitis to Philip. Antipas and Philip were entitled tetrarchs (=rulers over a fourth part); Archelaus, ethnarch (=ruler over a nation), with the promise of the title of king if he should be worthy of it. After nine years of misgovernment and cruelty, he was deposed and banished by Augustus. His dominions were then made a Roman province, governed by a Roman procurator.

*afraid . . . thither.* As the narrative rests on the idea that Bethlehem was Joseph's home, he naturally thought of going there. But Antipas was of a milder disposition than Archelaus. *notwithstanding*—"and."

Ver. 23. *Nazareth* lay in a deep hollow in the hills of Southern Galilee; but from the edge of the hills, a short way distant, a wide expanse of country could be seen. The view commanded the scenes of many of the most stirring events of Israel's past history, the great highways along which traders, travellers, and Roman legions passed up and down. Jesus' home was secluded but within full view of the

mighty past and the stirring present—a place to view the world from above.

*He . . . Nazarene.* Such a prophetic word is quite unknown. The vagueness of the reference is seen in the phrase, “by the prophets.” The best explanation yet given is that Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Zechariah refer to the Messiah under the title of the Branch (*i.e.* of the house of David), in Hebrew, Nezer. The similarity of Nezer to Nazareth suggested the reference. The motive will be apologetic. “The Nazarenes” was a contemptuous name given to the early Christians, and the evangelist would catch at the faintest allusion in prophecy to consecrate the name. There is probably an apologetic motive underlying the whole account of the flight to Egypt. The Jews in the early Christian ages accounted for Jesus’ miraculous power by His having learned magical arts in Egypt. This looks like evidence for a sojourn in Egypt independent of Matthew. But Matthew, by showing that the sojourn took place in Jesus’ infancy, makes the Jewish attack appear groundless.

### III.-IV. 11. PREPARATION FOR THE MESSIAH’S MINISTRY.

#### III. 1-12. THE BAPTIST AND HIS MESSAGE.

1 IN those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the  
2 wilderness of Judæa, and saying, Repent ye: for the

Ver. 1. Some thirty years intervene between the close of Chap. II. and the beginning of Chap. III. The narrative is now attached to Mark with additions common to Matthew and Luke.

*In those days*—the expression of a later age looking back on the great days of the genesis of Christianity. *came*—“comes,” dramatic present. John breaks on the scene—a new spiritual force suddenly arresting attention. *the Baptist*. So named after the outstanding feature of his work. *preaching*—“heralding,” the technical word for delivering a message about the kingdom of God. *the wilderness of Judæa*. Between the Central Plateau on the one side and the Jordan and the Dead Sea on the other, a wild, rugged country intersected with ravines, meagre pasture land with bare rocks, stretches of sand, and an occasional rich oasis, the home of Amos and Jeremiah.

Ver. 2. *Repent . . . hand*. Matthew summarises the Baptist’s preaching, not as Mark i. 4, but as Mark i. 5 summarises Jesus’ preaching, to show that the Baptist’s and Jesus’ early preaching were identical. To prevent misunderstanding of Jesus’ baptism at the hands of John, Matthew omits “unto remission of sins” (Mark i. 4). *Repent*. A moral and spiritual change of mind as distinguished from a mere regret for the past. The change of mind includes a change of heart and involves a change of life. It is essentially a change in attitude and purpose consonant with the kingdom. *the kingdom of heaven*, lit. “of the heavens.” In the later centuries B.C., the Jews,

3 kingdom of heaven is at hand. For this is he that was  
spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one  
crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord,  
4 make his paths straight. And the same John had his raiment  
of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and  
5 his meat was locusts and wild honey. Then went out to him

feeling intensely the transcendence of God above the world, disliked the use of the Divine name, and said Heaven when they meant God. The "kingdom" means the rule, the sovereignty of God; not the sphere or territory ruled by the King, but His ruling as opposed to all human government. "The kingdom of the heavens" = "the rule of the Transcendent One." Though synonymous with the kingdom of God, it always has in Matthew, whose favourite expression it is, a flavour of transcendence, and is to be regarded as reflecting in Matthew a Jewish atmosphere, as the kingdom of God in Mark and Luke reflects a Gentile atmosphere (cf. Appendix, Note B). *at hand*. John's dominant motive for repentance, like Jesus', is not social nor ethical, but religious. The repentance is necessary because only those whose minds are in harmony with the will of God can enter the Messianic kingdom and escape the judgment which will immediately precede it. Repentance is urgent because of the imminence of the kingdom and its judgment.

Ver. 3. In Isa. xl. 3 a nameless Voice calls on the exiles in Babylon to prepare a way in the wilderness lying between Babylon and Palestine for God, who is coming to lead His captives back to their home land. Matthew regards this as a direct prophecy of John, and makes it a more exact prophecy by following the LXX, which translates "the voice of one crying in the wilderness" instead of "Hark, One calling! prepare ye in the wilderness the way of the Lord." The words are beautifully descriptive of John, whose person was lost in his message and whose work was preparatory for Christ.

Ver. 4. "John's dress and food also preached" (Bengel). *raiment* . . . *hair*. A coarse, strong garment woven out of camel's hair, used also as a tent cover. John clothed himself like Elijah (2 Kings i. 8), perhaps intentionally imitating him, but certainly because he possessed the same stern, ascetic spirit. *locusts*. Still eaten by the poor and the Bedawin, sprinkled with salt, boiled or roasted, the wings and legs being stripped off. *wild honey*. Either wild bees' honey or tree honey, a substance exuding from palms, figs, and other trees.

Ver. 5. John was not like Jesus, an itinerant preacher. He kept to the wilderness and the Jordan, and let men come to him. But his unbending aloofness only heightened the impression he produced. The revival spread of itself from his immediate neighbourhood in ever-widening circles till the whole countryside and even the stiffly conservative capital poured down to the wilderness (cf. xxi. 26). Even a quarter of a century later there were disciples of John as far away as Ephesus.

Jerusalem, and all Judæa, and all the region round about  
 6 Jordan, and were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing  
 7 their sins. But when he saw many of the Pharisees and  
 Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O  
 generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the  
 8 wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for re-

Ver. 6. *baptized*. John did not originate the practice of baptism, but the place and significance he gave to it were original, for which cf. n. on ver. 11. *in Jordan*. Chosen from its suitability for the purposes of immersion, also from its sacred associations with Elijah and Elisha. There Elijah bestowed his spirit on Elisha, and Elisha made Naaman the leper wash and be clean. *confessing their sins*—not on condition of confessing but while confessing. The only condition required by John was repentance professed in the desire to be consecrated by baptism. The confession would rather be spontaneous, a testimony to the intensity and sincerity of their desire.

Vers. 7-12 give a summary of the Baptist's preaching. A few of the pithiest sayings of the Baptist are here grouped together. In Luke they are addressed to the people, but in Matthew to the Pharisees and Sadducees, to whom alone vers. 7, 8 seem applicable. The sayings would be uttered on different occasions to different audiences.

In vers. 7-10 John insists on an ethical repentance; in vers. 11, 12 he contrasts himself and his work with the Messiah and His work.

Ver. 7. *Pharisees and Sadducees*. Cf. Appendix, Note A. *to his baptism*—to be baptized by him. *generation of vipers*—"viper-brood." Easterns indeed use stronger language than Westerns, but the emphasis is not on vipers but on their actions, though the word aptly expresses the subtle ways and malign disposition of their serpent minds (cf. Matt. xii. 34, xxiii. 33). The reference is to the flight of serpents before a running desert fire or when the stubble-fields were set on fire before the winter sowing. *who*. Man or God? The motive in repentance is vital because a mind is changed only when moved by the Spirit of God, by love of the truth and desire to be right. The Baptist suspects that it is merely fear of the wrath to come which has moved them—a prudential motive. Vipers flee when they feel the fire, but they remain vipers still. *wrath to come*. The common Messianic expectation was that the kingdom would be ushered in by a terrible day of judgment, but only against the heathen. John makes all unrepentant Israelites subject to it, and so he ethicised their political and national conception of religion.

Ver. 8. *therefore*—if you wish to escape. *fruits*. "Fruit." John does lay emphasis on the inwardness of morality—conduct is the fruit of character—though not to the same degree as Jesus, but he insists on its coming to fruit in deeds. *meet for*. "Worthy of." A desire to be baptized would be regarded by him as fruit, but not as adequately corresponding to the inward change of mind required.

- 9 pentance: and think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.
- 10 And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn
- 11 down, and cast into the fire. I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he

Ver. 9. *say within yourselves.* Hebrew spoke of thinking as a speaking within oneself. *Abraham.* The promise was indeed made to Abraham and his seed, but physical descent, membership in the Jewish nationality (=the Jewish Church), was no guarantee of spiritual salvation. *these stones*—pointing to the stones by the side of the Jordan. Existing Jews are not essential for the fulfilment of Messianic promises. A new physical creation is possible.

Ver. 10. The axe lying at the foot of the trees tells how the woodsman—Messiah conceived as a judge—may come at any moment. So far is God from hesitating to destroy them. *every tree.* Individual responsibility involved in an ethical conception of judgment. *good fruit.* The earth is to be cleared both of the fruitless, the negatively good, and of the degenerate, the positively evil. Only positive goodness justifies existence and will inherit the kingdom viewed as coming on the earth. *cast into the fire.* Used as firewood.

Ver. 11. *baptize . . . water.* John's baptism was essentially an act of consecration, preparatory to the kingdom, symbolising by the immersion of the whole body the consecration of the whole man. But for all, except Christ, this consecration required repentance, and this change of mind, preceding baptism, is symbolised, not created, by going under and coming up out of the water. There is no evidence that his baptism conferred the remission of sins. It only (Mark i. 4) aimed at that, *i.e.* prepared men for it and promised it to them. It was symbolic, *with water.*

*unto repentance*—*i.e.* having repentance as the end in view. The expression seems to mean that repentance follows on and is brought about by baptism, which is not John's view. But the form of expression is probably due to reminiscence of Mark's "unto remission of sins" (Mark i. 4), which Matthew has omitted because he definitely connects that with the death of Christ (xxvi. 28), and probably because it does not apply to the baptism of Jesus. Matthew may, however, use it in a timeless sense, meaning simply that John's baptism turned round repentance and bound the baptized to the repentance they had professed.

*he . . . me*=the Messiah. *mightier.* Power is the dominant idea in the Baptist's conception of the Messiah, but it is spiritual power, power to regenerate Israel, for which John felt himself inadequate. The difference between John's power and the Messiah's is the

12 shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

difference between baptism with water and baptism with the Holy Spirit and with fire, between the symbol and the reality. *whose shoes*. It was the duty of the most menial slave to carry his master's shoes to him and from him. *worthy*—"fit." This feeling of insufficient ability springs probably not so much from a sense of the holiness as of the sublime spiritual power of the Messiah. It is like the humility felt before a majestic mountain. He is awed by the greatness of the Christ. *baptize . . . Ghost*—from Mark i. 8, where it means, bestow on you (=the repentant) the Holy Spirit, whose chief gift was to be righteousness. The baptism with water was only a symbol and a promise of the reality which the Messiah alone is able to give, because He alone possesses the Holy Spirit which He gives by transmitting it. *with fire*. Matthew adds this to Mark. To baptize with fire is to destroy the unrepentant—a work of judgment. It has nothing to do here with the spiritual fervour which comes from the gift of the Spirit (Acts ii. 3), nor with cleansing the repentant by burning up the evil in them. It is the nation who are here cleansed by destroying the unrepentant individuals. Some regard the baptism with the Holy Spirit as also an act of judgment, taking it as meaning the sifting spirit of judgment, for which Isa. iv. 4 is an exact parallel. This seems supported by 12*a*, and judgment is the sole aspect of Messiah's work, which is otherwise in view in vers. 7-12. But it was not probably Mark's meaning, and the likelihood is that Matthew has added Messiah's work of judgment on the unrepentant to Messiah's bestowal of the Holy Spirit on the repentant. John is to be regarded as having taught both.

Ver. 12. Best taken as an explanation of *with fire*, which Matthew may have added to introduce this saying. The wheat, trodden by the oxen or the threshing sledge, lies on the threshing floor; the grain and the chaff, including the broken straw, all mixed together, though detached. This is the state of the people when the Messiah enters for judgment. With the fan (=shovel) the farmer throws the mingled grain and chaff into the air. The wind carries the chaff away to form an adjacent heap. This heap of chaff is subsequently set on fire.

*is . . . hand*, ready even now for immediate action (cf. ver. 10). *thoroughly*—the whole floor from end to end. The whole nation is to be sifted. *with . . . fire*. The fire once started rages on till the whole heap is burned—the complete destruction of the unrepentant, wiped out of the earth on which the kingdom is to be established. John's view of the judgment is by Jesus transferred to the Second Advent, and the unquenchable fire becomes everlasting punishment in hell (Matt. xxv. 31-46).



## III. 13-17. THE BAPTISM OF JESUS.

13 Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be  
 14 baptized of him. But John forbade him, saying, I have need  
 15 to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus  
 answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it  
 becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered  
 16 him. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway  
 out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him,  
 and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and

Ver. 13. *Then*—a vague conception of time, a regular formula with Matthew, parallel to “in those days,” ver. 1. *cometh*. The Baptist’s preaching, penetrating to Galilee, came to Jesus as a call to His public ministry. Hitherto He had lived in private life as a carpenter.

Ver. 14. *forbade*—“tried to forbid.” Matthew alone records John’s hesitation to baptize Jesus. *I have . . . me*. This obviously implies that John looked on Jesus as the Messiah before the baptism. He cannot understand how the Sinless Messiah should seek the baptism of repentance at the hands of a sinful man, nor how the Messiah who baptizes with the Holy Spirit should seek John’s symbolic preparatory baptism. But as neither Mark nor Luke know of John’s recognising Jesus as the Messiah before His baptism, Matthew has probably antedated the recognition and introduced at this point a saying (ver. 15) in which Jesus subsequently explained the meaning of His baptism.

Ver. 15. *now*. Afterwards their relation will be reversed. This obviously implies that Jesus was conscious of being the Messiah. *it becometh . . . righteousness*=to leave nothing undone which God has required. John was a prophet sent by God to baptize all. It is therefore required of God that all submit to baptism. It was not necessary in itself that Jesus, the Messiah, be baptized, but He submits because it was beautifully fitting that John and Jesus, who make God’s will supreme, should omit nothing which God has required of all. Jesus thus identifies Himself with man, but He does so because it is His vocation to identify Himself with the will of God, which requires of Him complete identification with man. His baptism is His dedication of Himself to His vocation.

Ver. 16. *straightway*. Taken from Mark, where it means immediately after coming out of the water. Matthew has rather misplaced it. *the heavens . . . opened*. Cf. Ezek. i. 1, where the words are used of a vision in the mind of the prophet. *he*—i.e. Jesus—*saw the Spirit . . . descending*. This means that Jesus was now endowed with the spiritual power needed for His vocation. The nature of this Divine spirit of power is described in, *like a dove*—the symbolic way in which Jesus expressed His experience, for Jesus alone is to be regarded as

17 lighting upon him : and lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

having seen the vision. The dove is a symbol for gentleness and tenderness (Cant i. 15), for inoffensiveness (Matt. x. 16), and in later Rabbinic literature for the brooding creative power of God. The Beatitudes depict this dove-like spirit of Jesus.

Ver. 17. *This*. In Mark and Luke the Voice speaks directly to Jesus. Here it speaks about Jesus, presumably to the Baptist, not to people around. What was an attestation or confirmation to Jesus Himself of His Messiahship and His vocation becomes an attestation to John. But if John heard the voice it would be hard to reconcile that with John's subsequent doubt (xi. 2-6). *from heaven*—not from the clouds but from God, and that, following Mark and Luke, within Jesus' own soul. *my beloved Son*—"my Son, the Beloved." *My Son* springs from Ps. ii. 7, which is clearly in view in Mark i. 41 and = the Messiah. It will not, however, be a mere official designation. It is Jesus' personality which fits Him for the Messianic calling, and therefore in Jesus' experience "my Son" must express His perfect filial consciousness of God. It has no metaphysical sense here (cf. Appendix, Note D). *The Beloved* . . . *pleased*, from Isa. xlii. 1, where the Servant = the personification of the true Israel, a section of the people, or, as some think, Israel idealised. But in Isa. lii. 13-liii. the Servant seems clearly to have become an individual Person whose career as the mysterious vicarious sufferer and sin-bearer is depicted. Jesus is by this Voice declared to be that One who is the ideal Servant of God fulfilling the ideal of service described by Isaiah, whether in this or in that passage of Isaiah the Servant be the nation, a section of it, or an individual. The reference is not merely to Isa. xlii. 1, but to the whole subject, including Isa. liii., the title of which is given in Isa. xlii. 1. *The Beloved*. In the Heb. and the LXX of Isa. xlii. 1, "mine elect." The Beloved and the Elect seem to have become in Christian circles interchangeable terms for the Messiah (cf. Eph. i. 9). *am well pleased*, lit. "was." So the LXX also, possibly to indicate that this attitude of God to the Servant did not first begin now, but was pre-temporal, which practically means eternal, though by itself that does not mean an attitude to a Servant already existing, but to an ideal Servant to be. It may, however, be simply used in a timeless sense, *i.e.* merely to indicate a fact.

The words of the Voice mean that Jesus is the One in whom the ideas of the Messiah-King and of the Servant of the Lord are fused and fulfilled. But the fusion of the two modifies both. He is the Messiah, but the vocation of the Messiah is the vocation of the Servant of the Lord. He is the Servant, but through service He wins the crown.

The fact that the Voice spoke in these O.T. words, that the truth about His Person and His vocation was mediated to Him through them, means that before His baptism He had been pondering on those passages which deal with the Messiah and the Servant of the Lord. What consciousness of Himself He had attained cannot be

known. But from the time of His baptism no development can be traced. Any apparent development is due to His spiritual strategy and to His gradual revelation of Himself and His destiny. If it were at this moment that He became clearly conscious that He was the Messiah-Servant, He must have been prepared to believe it, must have been trembling on the verge of it. If it were simply an attestation and confirmation of His own convictions, it must have come to Him with the force of a new revelation, for it is a sublimely exalted spiritual experience which is here described. He came to the baptism in any case to consecrate Himself to God, and whether dimly or clearly conscious of His vocation, He would not embark on it until He heard the unmistakable call of God, for that is the outstanding characteristic of His whole life. It is also clear that the thought of His cross, of a career crowned by martyrdom, whether in the form of crucifixion or not, was already present in His mind as an essential element in His vocation. For Isa. liii., as we have seen, is involved in the Voice. He numbers Himself in His baptism not merely with man but with the transgressors. He does that, however, not simply from an unselfish motive, but as a necessity involved in His identification of Himself with the will of God. It is the call of destiny. It springs out of His vocation.

#### IV. 1-11. THE TEMPTATION.

1 THEN was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to  
2 be tempted of the devil. And when he had fasted forty

The temptations here described are the temptations of the Messiah, the temptations to which Jesus was subject in fulfilling His Messianic vocation, *i.e.* in establishing the kingdom of God, in winning that ascendancy over men's minds which would make them obedient to the will and purpose of God. He is to be the King of men, and obedience to Him will be obedience to God. The problem is how is He to gain power over men.

At the same time the temptations are personal temptations. To be the Messiah it is necessary to be a true man. It is only by living the perfect human life that He can at once reveal how a man should live and win ascendancy over man. His character as well as His work is at stake. It is only by His winning the victory in His own personal life over all the forces antagonistic to God that the kingdom of God can be established. The conqueror in His own spiritual conflict becomes the spiritual leader of mankind. But the actual temptations, to which He was thus personally subject, arose out of the way of life which He would have to follow, in order to fulfil the vocation described in note on iii. 17.

Possible alternatives presented themselves as suggestions from without. Their peculiarly fierce appeal sprang, partly from the difficulty of clearly detecting the falsity in their plausible appeal, and

3 days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungered. And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son

partly from the shrinking of human nature from those ways of life which converge on a cross. These temptations recurred as He met in His life the alternatives here perceived by anticipation. But He fights them out in principle at the start within His soul. The narrative implies that their pressure upon Him at this time had that peculiar intensity which temptations have, when they first rush in on one, before the mind has had time to see its way through them. After the exalted moment at the baptism, it is borne in upon Him what His vocation will involve. He is driven into retirement to reflect. Before He will take a single step forward, He fights the battle of the soul outright. After His Temptation, He went forward with His eyes open. He did not go blindly to His cross, like a moth to the flame.

What actually happened during the Temptation can have been known only to Himself. He must have related it afterwards to His disciples. The story is of the nature of a parabolic representation of an inward spiritual conflict, described in the imaginative concrete way in which Jesus was wont to express spiritual truth.

Ver. 1. *of the Spirit*. An inward impulse of the Spirit which came upon Him at the baptism. *to be tempted* (cf. n. on vi. 13).

*the devil*. The principle of moral evil had gradually come to be distinctly personalised in Jewish thought. In Job, Satan is still one of the sons of God, whose function it is to test men, and he receives his instructions from God. Later he stands opposed to God. Here Jesus is put by God in Satan's way.

Ver. 2. *fasted*. Not necessarily entire abstinence from food (cf. xi. 18), but probably that is the meaning here. The fasting was due to absorption of mind, not to any ascetic tendency (cf. xi. 19). *forty*. Most likely a round number, reminiscent perhaps of Moses' and Elijah's fasting (Ex. xxxiv. 28; 1 Kings xix. 8). *afterward*. The Temptation in Matthew begins after a forty days' fast. In Luke it appears to last the whole time.

Ver. 3. *came*. Suggestion from without, actually occurring in Jesus' mind. Probably the Tempter is here conceived as coming in visible form. But the story is a parabolical representation of an inward conflict.

*If . . . God*. There is no doubt suggested, as the Greek proves, and therefore Jesus is not asked to test His conviction of His Messiahship by His ability to work a miracle. The Temptation turns on the conflict between true and false conceptions of Messiahship. Son of God=Messiah (cf. iii. 17). *Command*. Jesus' miraculous power, whether residing in Himself or coming from God through prayer, is assumed both by the Tempter and by Jesus. The suggestion is to use His power to escape from the pressure of human need, the particular occasion being hunger. This (ver. 4) Jesus refuses to do, because the Messiah must completely identify Himself

4 of God, command that these stones be made bread. But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth  
5 of God. Then the devil taketh him up into the holy  
6 city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, and saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down : for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee : and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any

with man, submitting to all the pressure of human need, and act at the bidding not of self but of God. He must trust in God and leave God to supply all His needs. It is the principle of vi. 32, and want, even hunger, is not to be satisfied by the selfish exercise of power. Whether it is to be satisfied or not, and how, depends on God, and guidance is to be left in God's hands. *these*—pointing to the stones lying at their feet. *bread*—"loaves." Each stone turned into a loaf.

Ver. 4. *It is written* (Deut. viii. 3). The Scripture is God's revealed mind guiding human action. *Man*. Jesus will be a true man. *shall not*—not a prohibition, but a statement of fact. It will prove to be the fact that no man can. *bread . . . word*. In Deuteronomy the contrast is not between the material and the spiritual, but between food which comes in the natural way through human activity=bread, and the food which comes in a supernatural way at the command of God=mannā. No man can live only by his own efforts. He must trust in God, on whom he is dependent, as will be poignantly proved in great emergencies, where man's extremity is God's opportunity.

This Messianic temptation is to build the kingdom on bread, *i.e.* to win ascendancy over men by satisfying their physical needs in such a way as would annihilate the conditions of life which necessitate dependence on God. The keenness of the temptation lies in Jesus' sympathy with human need.

Ver. 5. *taketh*—in vision (cf. Ezek. viii. 3). Perhaps with the idea of sudden seizure characteristic of fanaticism. *the holy city*. Matthew's favourite designation of Jerusalem, holy because God dwelt there. *a pinnacle*—"the winglet," the name of some unknown corner of the Temple overlooking a precipice.

Ver. 6. *cast thyself down*. Some take this to be a temptation to make a sensational display to dazzle men's senses. But it is rather a reckless action producing a desperate situation, than a mere "show wonder." It is the temptation of religious (cf. the holy city, the Temple) fanaticism—blindly abandoning reason and impatiently precipitating a crisis, from which God only can extricate Him.

*it is written*. In Ps. xci. 11, 12, expressing God's care over the godly soul that trusts Him. The omission of "to keep thee in all thy ways" will be due to the evangelist rather than to Satan. The Devil can quote Scripture like a saint, but he is a literalist and perverts the spirit.

7 time thou dash thy foot against a stone. Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy  
 8 God. Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and showeth him all the kingdoms of the  
 9 world, and the glory of them; and saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.  
 10 Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only  
 11 shalt thou serve. Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him.

Ver. 7. *again*. The meaning of Scripture is found by balancing one passage against another (Deut. vi. 16 against Ps. xci. 11, 12). To tempt in Deut. vi. 16 means not to provoke, but to test as one does who doubts and distrusts God. This fanatical act, an attempt to force God's hand, Jesus calls not faith, but distrust of God; not surrender to God's will, but assertion of self-will, upsetting God's plan.

Vers. 8, 9. *mountain*. Not a geographical mountain, but a mountain of the spirit. The temptation of imperial ambition due to the Messianic dream of a world-wide empire, Messiah's destiny. *give*. Satan was regarded as the Prince of this world (John xii. 31), and offers what was indeed promised to the Messiah, but as the gift of God.

*worship me—worship God*. The essential contrast is between despotic force crushing down the wills of men and love winning men to spiritual obedience, as the means by which world-wide empire is to be gained. The Devil offers a short cut to His destiny. But it is the Jesuit temptation to make the end justify the means. Jesus chose the long way, and it has proved both long and hard (cf. vii. 14).

Ver. 10. *Get thee hence*—"Begone!" The passionate vehemence is due to its being the popular Messianic ideal, to its speciousness, to its appeal to Jesus' imagination, to the intense moral aversion it evoked in Jesus. *Satan*—mentioned for the first time. In this, the most subtle but most revolting of the three temptations, Jesus discovers the Prince of Evil. The motive hidden in the two preceding temptations under the guise of self-preservation and unlimited faith in God comes here clear into view—rebellion against the supremacy of God. *worship*, instead of "fear," appears in a MS. of the LXX, which the evangelist may have used, or he substituted it to make it correspond with ver. 9. No compromise with evil in method or in aim. Thereby Jesus broke not only with the Devil but with the world, religious and otherwise.

Ver. 11. *Then*. Decisive victory, clear disentanglement of His position. His soul by passionate rejection has thrown out all suggestions of evil, and is clean. *angels*. Discovered and most appreciated after a long struggle with the Devil. No doubt Matthew

means that they brought food to Him (cf. Mark i. 31 ; 1 Kings xix. 5). But no doubt also Jesus in describing His experience meant rather a spiritual ministry (cf. Luke xxii. 43). After a victorious struggle against severe temptation, there does come an indescribable peace and serene spiritual gladness, the deeper, the cleaner and more decisive the victory.

#### IV. 12-XVIII. 35. THE GALILEAN MINISTRY OF THE MESSIAH.

##### Vers. 12-17. THE OPENING OF THE MINISTRY IN GALILEE.

12 Now when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison,  
13 he departed into Galilee ; and leaving Nazareth, he came  
and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast, in the  
14 borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim : that it might be  
fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying,  
15 The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, by  
the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles ;  
16 the people which sat in darkness saw great light ; and to  
them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is

Ver. 12. The imprisonment of John was Jesus' call to begin work. *departed*. Because, though under the jurisdiction of Herod Antipas, who had imprisoned John, its distance made it a safer place to begin work in. It was, however, also His home land, and through its mixed population and contact with the outside world more hospitable to new ideas than conservative Judæa.

Ver. 13. *Capernaum*. Identified with the ruins Tell Hûm or Khân Minyeh on the Sea of Galilee. It was Jesus' headquarters throughout His Galilean ministry. Matthew introduces His settlement in Capernaum at an earlier date than Mark i. 21, because he is contemplating the meaning of the ministry whose centre was Capernaum.

*sea coast—i.e. of the Lake of Galilee. Zabulon and Nephthalim*. These tribal divisions had long disappeared from current nomenclature, but are here mentioned to introduce the following prophecy.

Vers. 15, 16. In the coming of Jesus, the Messianic Light, to Galilee the evangelist sees a fulfilment of Isa. ix. 1, 2, which he freely reproduces from the Hebrew, or more probably he follows some Greek version, not the LXX. *by the way of the sea*. "The way of the sea." Whatever Isaiah meant, Matthew takes this to be descriptive of the western shores of Galilee and *beyond Jordan* of the land east of the Jordan, called Peræa. *Galilee of the Gentiles*, lit. "district of the heathen (foreigners)"—so called from the numbers of foreigners settled in it. *the people*. Those mentioned in ver. 15. *darkness*. Here in contrast to the Messianic Light. For Matthew the Judean idea of Galilee seen in John vii. 52, "out of Galilee ariseth no prophet,"

17 sprung up. From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent : for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

would be of importance. The fact that Judæa was the expected place of the Messiah's appearing no doubt made him lay stress on Isaiah's prophecy by way of apologetic against the Jews, but it would be in itself significant to him.

Ver. 17. *began*. Of the Judæan ministry of the Fourth Gospel Matthew knows nothing. *Repent . . . hand*. Cf. iii. 2. Summary of Jesus' early preaching. The addition of Mark i. 15, "believe the gospel," is omitted by Matthew, possibly because he thought it contained in "repent ye," certainly to assimilate the expression to his description of John's preaching. Matthew means that the early preaching of Jesus was identical with that of John. But while both called for a change of mind, the mind into which Jesus called men to change was other than that which John stood for. It is revealed throughout the Gospel, and especially in the Sermon on the Mount.

#### IV. 18-22. THE CALL OF THE FIRST FOUR DISCIPLES.

18 And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren,  
Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net  
19 into the sea : for they were fishers. And he saith unto them,  
20 Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. And they  
21 straightway left their nets, and followed him. And going on  
from thence, he saw other two brethren, James the son of  
Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their  
22 father, mending their nets ; and he called them. And they  
immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him.

Ver. 18. Jesus follows the example of the Baptist and of the prophets in forming a circle of disciples.

*sea of Galilee*. 500 feet below the Mediterranean, very rich in fish. Fishing and agriculture were the chief industries of Galilee. *called*. Simon, who at the time the Gospel was written was called Peter.

Ver. 19. *Follow me*, lit. "Hither ! after me," the same word as in xi. 28. Jesus' call is not only an invitation but a command, assuming a claim and expecting obedience, but it is spoken in a kindly, winning tone. *fishers of men* (cf. Jer. xvi. 16). Jesus speaks to the masses like the Baptist, but His special method is to gather individuals into His fellowship and train them to win others. He sets men to catch men.

Ver. 20. *straightway*. This sudden obedience would seem to imply some previous knowledge of Jesus (cf. John i. 35-42). But it reveals the overmastering influence of Jesus' personality. They had to obey.

Ver. 22. *and their father*. This abandonment of their father as well as of their occupation is significant of the absoluteness of the



claim of Jesus. Whatever conflicts with the call of Jesus, good and natural as well as evil, has to be renounced.

IV. 23-25. SUMMARY DESCRIPTION OF THE GALILEAN MINISTRY, PARTICULARS OF WHICH ARE GIVEN IN V. 1-IX. 34.

23 And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease  
 24 among the people. And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatic, and those that had  
 25 the palsy; and he healed them. And there followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judæa, and from beyond Jordan.

Ver. 23. Teaching, preaching, healing—the three forms of the ministry of Jesus. *synagogues*. The Synagogue, which arose probably out of the religious needs of the exiles severed in Babylon from the Temple, had come to be the centre of the religious, social, and educational life of each local community. It was through it that the scribes worked on the people. The Temple, where the priests attended to the sacrificial worship, still remained the national centre, but the vitality of Judaism sprang from the Synagogue, and Judaism was consequently able to survive the destruction of the Temple. *preaching*. Heraldng, as a prophet, distinguished from teaching—the unfolding of the principles of life. *the gospel of the kingdom*. The good news of the near advent of the kingdom, as in ver. 17. Gospel, strictly a message about the kingdom, whether loved or feared, comes to mean good news, because it is so to those who welcome it.

Ver. 24. *Syria*. The Roman province of which Palestine was a part. His fame extended to the heathen, who also shared in His healing ministry. *diseases*. Common troubles. *torments*. Troubles of a severer type. *and those*, “namely, those”—examples of “torments”—*possessed with devils*. A physical-psychical trouble assuming various forms. Personal evil spirits were supposed to be the cause of the physical and psychical derangement of the victims, who under this prevalent belief felt conscious of being possessed like maniacs. *lunatic*. “Moonstruck,” *i.e.* epileptic. The attacks were supposed to follow the phases of the moon.

Ver. 25. The fame of Jesus draws crowds to Galilee from the whole of Palestine and beyond it. *Decapolis*. A district of ten towns, south-east of the Lake, across the Jordan, mostly inhabited by Gentiles. *beyond Jordan*—*i.e.* Peræa.

# V.-VII. THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT, A GROUP OF TYPICAL SAYINGS, REVEALING HIS PRINCIPLES.

- 1 AND seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain : and
- 2 when he was set, his disciples came unto him : and he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying,

Luke also knows of a sermon delivered by Jesus (Luke vi. 20-49) beginning with Beatitudes and ending with the Similitude of the Two Houses. The Aramaic Logia of St. Matthew is no doubt the ultimate written source of the sermon for both Matthew and Luke, but it evidently reached them in different forms (cf. Introduction, pp. vii-viii). In Matthew's version of it there is found matter which Luke records elsewhere and sayings unrecorded by Luke.

Tradition holds fast to the fact that Jesus once delivered such a sermon. Other sayings of Jesus would gather round this nucleus, and this enlarged sermon would be embodied in the Logia of St. Matthew. It is probable that the First Evangelist carried this process farther and added sayings of Jesus found in other parts of the Logia, from his desire to present the teaching of Jesus in a massive form (cf. Introduction, pp. xiii-xv).

Ver. 1. *a mountain*. "The mountain," possibly, as in xv. 29, the higher hilly ground in contrast with the lower levels by the sea. This would be in line with Luke vi. 17, where the plain is the scene. It may, however, be that particular mountain with which the sermon was traditionally connected. The object of the ascent is evidently to secure a good position from which to address the multitudes. The idea that Jesus is a new legislator contrasting with Moses on Mount Sinai, lies rather in the position of authority assumed by Jesus, though the geographical position may well have seemed suggestive to the evangelist. *was set*. "Had sat down," the usual posture of the Jewish teachers. *his disciples*. The sermon is a course of instruction ("*taught*") for disciples. So also Luke vi. 20. But the discourse is meant to be heard by the multitudes (cf. vii. 28 ; Luke vi. 17).

Ver. 2. *opened his mouth*. A formal phrase, the prelude to a weighty utterance. *them*. The disciples.

## V. 3-12. THE BEATITUDES.

- 3 Blessed are the poor in spirit : for theirs is the kingdom of

Ver. 3. The Beatitude of need. The original form of the beatitude is to be seen in Luke vi. 20. But in Jewish thought the idea of piety was included in the concept "poor," and ungodliness in the concept "rich," because the ungodly rich had been the oppressors of the godly poor. "In spirit" is therefore added to prevent misunderstanding on the part of readers unacquainted with Jewish terminology. "Poor in spirit" means not a

4 heaven. Blessed are they that mourn : for they shall be  
 5 comforted. Blessed are the meek : for they shall inherit the  
 6 earth. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after

lowly estimate of oneself, but consciousness of personal need ; but it is this consciousness, as evoked by the struggles of social poverty, which is the exact point. *Blessed*. Not of a present feeling of happiness, but prospectively as the heirs of the kingdom. *is*. The present tense is not to be pressed, as in the original Aramaic there would be no verb at all. The meaning is "belongs to," as an inheritance belongs to the heir, practically equal to "shall be," as in the other beatitudes. The thought, however, that God already is in these heirs of the kingdom is essentially true, though it goes beyond the immediate meaning of the saying. Consciousness of personal need is not only alone receptive of Divine grace and responsive to Divine stimuli, but is caused by the presence of God within the spirit (cf. Phil. iii. 8-14, and Pascal's saying, "Thou wouldst not seek Me, hadst thou not already found Me"). The distinction is between the striving of God's Spirit in the struggler and the realisation of the ideal life in the established kingdom. *the kingdom of heaven* (cf. n. on iii. 2). Here it is viewed as a future event.

Ver. 4. The Beatitude of sorrow. *mourn*—*i.e.* for sin. In Isa. lxi. 2 it is sorrow for the sin in Israel. This social aspect of sin and sorrow is essential to Christ's thought, but the sorrow of the individual for his own sin is vital also, and the beatitude must be extended to cover all sorrow. For it is stated in a general form, and is meant to be comprehensive. The presupposition always is, however, that the sorrow is godly, *i.e.* springs out of their goodness, the baffled aspiration, thwarted by one's own or by social sins and troubles. *comforted*—*i.e.* by seeing the good realised triumphantly, the life that is missed won, when the kingdom comes.

Ver. 5. The Beatitude of submissiveness. A standing O.T. beatitude (cf. Ps. xxxvii. 11). The meek are those who are voluntarily submissive in spirit in the face of those wrongs and adversities which make them poor ; but though it be shown towards the wrong-doer, it is to the will of God they are submissive. The motive is religious. Therefore they *shall inherit the earth*, which belongs to God, when the kingdom comes, viewed as established on the earth. But this principle is operative even now. This meekness is due not to want of spirit, but to self-control, docility of mind, and obedience to the will of God, working out His purposes of good. Self-mastery is the road to world-mastery. The secrets of nature are only discovered by one who sits down before them as a little child to be taught. Only by obeying the laws of nature can we make nature our servant. Possession without the power of appreciation is only external ownership.

Ver. 6. The Beatitude of strenuous desire. Desire is the cause of all the struggle and will to live. Therefore to Buddha it is the root of all evil, and salvation is reached by crushing down desire. But

7 righteousness: for they shall be filled. Blessed are the  
 8 merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure  
 9 in heart: for they shall see God. Blessed are the peace-  
 makers: for they shall be called the children of God.  
 10 Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness'  
 11 sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye  
 when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say  
 12 all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice,  
 and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven:  
 for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

to Christ it is the soul of action, and leads to the blessed life. Only, the desire which leads to life is a desire to be right with God; and when it amounts to a passion, it is certain to be satisfied when the kingdom comes, *i.e.* they will be ruled by righteousness and see it ruling in the world (cf. Luke xiii. 24). This desire to be right with God not only compels to straight dealing and to repentance, but to the longing to be forgiven, and lies at the root of the Atonement.

Ver. 7. *obtain mercy*—from God at the Day of Judgment, preceding the inauguration of the kingdom, on the principle of getting as we give (cf. vi. 14, vii. 2).

Ver. 8. Spiritual insight depends on moral purity. The heart in Scripture is the centre of the being, the seat of thought as well as of feeling and desire, and the vision of God is the consummation of religious bliss. They will see Him when the kingdom comes.

Ver. 9. *peacemakers*. Not the peaceable, but those who strive to produce peace among men. *called*. Declared at the coming of the kingdom, to be what they are now, though often misunderstood, *the children*, "sons" of God, *i.e.* like Him in spirit.

Ver. 10. The Beatitude of opposition. Endurance proves that they do put a supreme value on righteousness, and opposition strengthens their passion. *Ipso facto* the kingdom belongs to them as its heirs (cf. n. on ver. 3).

Ver. 11. Application of ver. 10 to the disciples. *for my sake*. The personal note which dominates the Fourth Gospel. Jesus makes personal loyalty to Himself identical with loyalty to righteousness, and thereby makes His Person unique.

Ver. 12. *exceeding glad*. "Leap in exultation," a very strong expression. Persecution is not to depress but to raise their spirits. *reward*. Not a reward for being good, but compensation for present distress. Jesus appeals not to the fighting instinct, but to the spiritual honour and high destiny awaiting them and already existing in the unseen. *in heaven*. Here the idea of a future kingdom on the earth gives place to the transcendental world of spirit. *for*. Assuming that the reward of the prophets is known to be great. *before you*. Their experience will not be exceptional. They only tread the path of the heroic dead.

## V. 13-16. THE VOCATION OF THE DISCIPLES.

13 Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot  
 14 of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on  
 15 an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth  
 16 light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine

Ver. 13 They are (1) the saviours of society (ver. 13); (2) the revealers of God (vers. 14-16). *salt*. Preserving it from destruction through moral corruption and keeping it wholesome. They make life in the world livable, and perhaps there is the idea of giving the true flavour to life, making it taste good. *if . . . savour*. Become insipid, tasteless. Savour=their distinctive virtue, their essential Christian character=the spirit in the Beatitudes=the spirit of Christ. *wherewith*. If it be lost, it cannot be recovered from the world, which does not possess it. As the spirit of God is only mediated through Christ, so the spirit of Christ, =the spirit of God, is only mediated through His disciples. It was they who created the Gospels, and even though we have the book, it is the man with the living spirit of Christ in him who is the saviour of society. *good for nothing*. A Christianity which has lost the spirit of Christ cannot fulfil its function of saving, and is of no value because of no use. *cast . . . men*. Saltless salt is only good for making a road where no life grows. Insipid Christianity is to be ruthlessly trampled down.

Vers. 14-16. Their function as revealers of God is described under three aspects. (1) The light of the world=the sun. As salt they are an element working in society; as its sun they transcend it and make men look up. Their light is not intellectual; it is the light of simple goodness, by which God and true life are revealed. The true aloofness from the world is perfect goodness. (2) In their heroic deeds, the aim of life, the city of God=the city of goodness, is revealed beyond all doubt, and by the sight of it in the spiritual distance men in the low world are guided up to God. (3) The light could only be hidden by disciples shrinking from the responsibility of their position. This were unnatural. It is the lamp-stand which is made for the lighted lamp (rather than candle), not the bushel, the common measure for corn found in any house. *all . . . house*. It is the picture of a one-roomed peasant's cottage, where all the family are gathered in the evening. A little light in a small sphere, in the humble home, but the responsibility is the same for the small sphere as for the great, and it is the same power of goodness which makes light and sweetness there.

Ver. 16. No theatrical display nor self-advertisement, but a frank, courageous Christian life lived in the open. *so*. Like the lamp

before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

shining for shining's sake, in its natural position. *your light*. Not the light of yourself, but the light entrusted to you, which shines in those works (word and deed), which awaken moral admiration (good=noble) and thus lead men to glorify the unseen transcendent. One whose character is revealed through these works of His sons, spirits like Him. *glorify*=magnify. The imagination of men needs to be kindled before they can appreciate the sublimity of His goodness. *your Father*. Jesus' favourite name for God, known as Father through the spirit of His sons.

#### V. 17-20. JESUS' RELATION TO THE PAST.

17 Think not that I am come to destroy the Law, or the Pro-  
18 phets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I  
say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle  
19 shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled. Who-  
soever therefore shall break one of these least commandments,  
and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the

Ver. 17. *destroy*=annul, do away with. *the Law, or the Prophets*=the whole O.T. revelation. The following sections, however, deal solely with His relation to the Mosaic Law. The prophets may be added here by Matthew, as some think, because elsewhere Jesus speaks of Himself as the Fulfilment of the Prophets also. But the crux of His antagonism to the Pharisees lay in His attitude towards the Law, and while stating generally His relation to the whole O.T., He may have gone on to deal with the immediate crucial point. *not to destroy, but to fulfil*. "Fulfil"=either (1) to carry into effect what is already there, as one executes a specific command or fulfils a promise made, which suits vers. 18, 19; or (2) to complete what is incomplete, though true so far as it goes, like completing an unfinished building, carrying out the design of it, or bringing to perfection a partially realised idea, which suits ver. 20 and the examples in vers. 21-48. In effect He did both. He carried into effect what was already definitely prescribed in the Law and promised in the prophets, but He penetrated into their essential principles, discarding what was alien to them, deepening them and extending their range, yet developing them along the lines already laid down. He did actually disannul certain elements in the Law (cf. vers. 34, 39), but He did so not as a destructive critic but as the consummator of the genius of Israel.

Vers. 18, 19. An expansion of the thought, "not to destroy." It is a very emphatic assertion of the eternal validity of the Mosaic Law, even in its smallest details. This validity of each detail cannot be strictly reconciled with vers. 34, 39 and other changes made by

kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.  
 20 For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Jesus, and some think that it could not therefore have formed a part of the original Sermon. That is plausible. But from Luke xvi. 17 we see that it was clearly a saying of Jesus, if spoken on another occasion. It was His method to assert His principles in an extreme form and leave the one to balance the other. He was intensely conservative, but it was of the essential principles of Mosaism He was conservative. So the Prophets of Israel, though the most progressive religious forces, felt they alone were the conservers of the original ideas of Israel. This conservatism of Jesus was a great difficulty to the Early Church, as His liberalism was to the Pharisees.

Ver. 18. *Till heaven* (=the material heaven, the sky) . . . *pass*. An Oriental hyperbole = "for ever." *jot*. "Yod," the smallest Hebrew letter (י). *tittle* = horn = the small extension of the line which distinguishes certain Hebrew letters from similar forms, e.g. י and ך. *till* . . . *fulfilled*. "Till all come to pass," and then, being realised, they *ipso facto* remain existing, or the end of the world has come.

Ver. 19. The whole law hangs organically together. The least equally with the greatest is the outcome of the principle, the expression of the will of God, and has the same obligation behind it. *break*. "loose" = make not binding. *least*. Not cast out, because it is due rather to misunderstanding than to moral fault; but least in position and honour, because possessing least the spirit of the kingdom, whole-hearted obedience to the will of God. Notice the kingdom is graded. *great*. Conscientiousness in little things is evidence of moral greatness.

Ver. 20. It is best to regard vers. 18, 19 as a parenthesis and connect "for" with ver. 17. For the kingdom shall not be entered unless the Law be fulfilled, and it is only fulfilled by a Higher Righteousness than the Pharisaic. Pharisaic righteousness was conformity to the letter of the Law: to be right with the Law was with them to be right with God, and the Law was often casuistically interpreted to suit themselves. They had no notion of the infinite nature of duty nor of the essential importance of motive, and their cast-iron legal system left no room for the inspiration of the Spirit, nor had they any idea of the need for the guidance of the Spirit in determining what is right, and of His help in doing it. Once the law was given, God remained deistically outside and above it, and was practically only needed to judge of obedience to the Law and assign rewards and punishments. The higher righteousness is based on insight into the principles of the law, is motivated by love and trust in God, and requires the guidance and help of the Spirit, obedience to the call and impulse of the living God, as of a son to a Father.

V. 21-26. FIRST EXAMPLE OF THE HIGHER RIGHTEOUSNESS  
WHICH FULFILS THE LAW—MURDER.

21 Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time,  
Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in  
22 danger of the judgment: but I say unto you, That whoso-  
ever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in  
danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his  
brother, Raca! shall be in danger of the council: but who-  
soever shall say, Thou fool! shall be in danger of hell fire.

Ver. 21. *heard*. Perhaps when the Law was read to you in the synagogue and explained. He addresses the common man, not the learned scribe. It is antithetic to "I say," as second-hand information to the final authority. For the same reason *it was said* is put as a vague and therefore indirect and unsatisfactory authority. It will cover the elders who formed the tradition as well as Moses. *by*. "to" the old generations under the Law and the Tradition contrasted with the new teaching. *Thou . . . judgment*. The Law and the Tradition summarily stated. *in danger of*. Liable to=come under the condemnation of. The judgment is either the condemnation of the local civil and criminal court of the district, consisting of three of the Rulers of the local synagogue, who had power to inflict capital punishment, or better (cf. next verse) simply the Divine condemnation.

Ver. 22. *I say*. Emphatic, virtually making Himself the final authority on right and wrong. *is angry*. The Law dealt only with the act, Jesus with the spirit of which the act is the fruit. *his brother*. In ver. 47 brothers=brother-disciples. But vers. 43-48 show that disciples should act towards those outside on the same principle as towards one another. The brotherhood of man is implicitly taught, and the offence is aggravated because it is against a brother.

*without a cause*. Not found in the best MSS; to be deleted. It was not Jesus' habit to qualify His statements when enunciating a principle. Jesus Himself was angry (Mark iii. 5), but that was pure moral indignation. The anger here spoken of is the spirit which would hurt another, and that might well be with or without a cause.

*shall . . . fire*. As the verse stands it is best taken as describing three degrees of guilt: (1) angry feeling, standing on the same level of guilt as the man whom the court of the Synagogue condemns, its severest penalty being death by the sword; (2) contemptuous sneering, standing on the same level of guilt as the man whom the Sanhedrin condemns, its severest penalty being death by stoning; (3) vile abuse, standing on the same level of guilt as the man who is cast into the valley of Hinnom. No doubt anger, contempt, abuse are ascending degrees of guilt, but the distinction between them, especially between contempt and abuse, seems pushed too far by this



23 Therefore, if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee ;

interpretation. The difference in punishment does not appear proportionate to the difference in moral obliquity, and the introduction of sin in action (speaking) seems out of place, where it is the spirit and motive which are in question. Further, Gehenna elsewhere on Jesus' lips always means the place of torment beyond. Some, therefore, suggest that the second and third clauses originally belonged to ver. 21 and illustrated Pharisaical casuistical distinctions. But such offences against a man would scarcely render one liable to such extreme sentences by the Jewish courts, and the sentence to exposure in the Valley of Hinnom could only be the sentence of the Sanhedrin ; while, if it were torment beyond, that would surely also be the punishment for murder and Raca. Others regard these two clauses as variant expressions of the same thought, spoken perhaps on another occasion. If the verse ended at *judgment*, we should have the exact point required. "In the traditional law only the act of murder comes under condemnation, but I say unto you, the angry spirit, of which it is the fruit, comes under the Divine condemnation." This we take to be the meaning intended, and judgment has then the same meaning in both verses.

*Raca*. A rather obscure expletive. Empty-headed ! the contemptuous sneer at another's stupidity. *council* = the Sanhedrin, the supreme court of the Jews, which tried cases of blasphemy, and alone could inflict the severest punishment—death by stoning. In Christ's time, however, no Jewish court could carry out the death penalty. The Romans reserved that right to themselves. *Thou fool* !—lit. *More*. If it be the Greek word, it is "fool," perhaps a translation of Raca. If it be the Hebrew Moreh, it is "fool" in the O.T. sense of "without the fear of God," godless. Then the distinction between Raca and More is something like the distinction between blockhead ! and blackguard ! the former sneering at his stupidity, the latter attacking his character. *hell fire*—lit. "the Gehenna of fire." Gehenna, Ge-Hinnom = the Valley of Hinnom, a valley lying south of Jerusalem close to the city. It had become an abhorrence, because there the people had sacrificed their children to Moloch (1 Kings xxiii. 10). It became the symbolic name for the place of torment after the final judgment. It is said, though it is not quite certain, that the dead bodies of animals and criminals along with the city's refuse were cast into this valley—the last disgrace—and fires were kept continually burning on the heap for purification. It seems necessary to take it here in its uniform sense on Christ's lips as the place of torment beyond.

Vers. 23, 24. THE RELIGIOUS NECESSITY FOR A RIGHT SPIRIT TOWARDS MAN.—Ver. 23. *Therefore*. Since angry feeling towards a man excludes from God. *if thou bring*—"art on the very point of offering" at one of the feasts of the Temple, probably the Day of

- 24 leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first  
 25 be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy  
 26 gift. Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in  
 the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee  
 to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and  
 thou be cast into prison. Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt  
 by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the utter-  
 most farthing.

Atonement, when they sought reconciliation with God. *hath ought against thee*—i.e. if you have done anything to hurt him. *first*. Perhaps better “go first: be reconciled.” Act on the sudden flash of memory, without a moment’s delay, though it interrupt the act of offering.

*be reconciled*. Here the wrong-doer takes the first step. In xviii. 15 it is the wronged. Whether wrong-doer or wronged, a disciple tries to secure reconciliation on his own initiative. The offended brother is required to forgive (Mark xi. 25). Though he refuse, the conciliatory spirit will make the offering acceptable to God. *and offer*. Humanity does not make worship unnecessary. Neither is it the point that morality is before religion—for religion is the inspiration of morality (ver. 45); but an act of religious worship does not give access to God unless the spirit of the kingdom—i.e. the spirit displayed by the Father, here the spirit of reconciliation—be in the worshipper.

Vers. 25, 26. RECONCILIATION WITH GOD MAN’S ONLY HOPE.—*Agree*—“be well disposed towards,” ready to come to terms with. *adversary*. In a legal process, the prosecuting creditor, who has right, the law, on his side. *whiles . . . way*. On the road to the law court=before he takes you to court, and even while you are still on the way thither. *at any time*—“perchance,” if he push his right. *officer*—i.e. of the synagogue, who executed the sentence of the judge.

This saying, given by Luke xii. 58 as uttered on another occasion, is probably out of its original setting here. Its command to be conciliatory and its reference to the courts, recalling ver. 22, will have suggested its insertion here. The settlement of human dispute by conciliation is eminently a principle of Christ, but in Luke the saying appears parabolic in character. Be reconciled to God by timely repentance before the Day of Judgment. *till . . . farthing*. The impenitent will be subjected to the full rigour of the moral law.

## V. 27-32. SECOND EXAMPLE—ADULTERY.

- 27 Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou

Ver. 27. The seventh commandment is taken as forbidding only the act, and in practice the stress may have been laid upon the act;

28 shalt not commit adultery: but I say unto you, 'That whoso-  
 ever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed  
 29 adultery with her already in his heart. And if thy right eye  
 offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is  
 profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish,  
 30 and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. And  
 if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee:  
 for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should  
 perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.  
 31 It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him  
 32 give her a writing of divorcement: but I say unto you, That  
 but the tenth commandment and such a passage as Job xxxi. 1  
 forbids the lust also.

Ver. 28. *whosoever*. The man or the woman, or both, are supposed to be already married. *to lust*. It is not the mere involuntary attraction which is condemned, but the desire, and the indulgence of it—which are voluntary. The sin arises when lust is the aim of the look.

In vers. 29-32 illustrations are given of what is required to fulfil this higher commandment. The eye, the hand, which specially minister to this passion by sight and touch, are to be ruthlessly dealt with, and divorce is not allowable.

Vers. 29, 30. Jesus cannot mean that the right eye should be literally plucked out, because the left eye would be equally liable to offend; and though both were plucked out, the inward passion would still remain. The right member was considered the more valuable. What Jesus will mean is that to attain purity of heart one must not hesitate at the sacrifice of what is the dearest (right eye) or most useful (right hand) to us. *offend*—entrap, catch you with the sudden spring of a trap, expressing the sudden vehemence and deadly grip of this passion. *pluck it out*=tear it out by the roots—a desperate remedy for a desperate disease. *cast it from thee*. Entire separation from all possible contact. *profitable*—in view of the coming judgment. *whole body*—not body as opposed to soul, but one member as opposed to the whole organism. *cast into hell*. The future punishment of the whole organism, contrasted with the perishing (=the death) of the part detached from the source of life resident in the organism.

Ver. 31. *a writing of divorcement*. Deut. xxiv. 1-4 does not enjoin divorce, but takes it as a prevailing custom, and assumes the giving of a bill. In doing so, it speaks of "some unseemly thing," lit. "the nakedness of a thing," probably improper, and not merely immoral behaviour, as the reason for divorce. The school of Shammai held the phrase to mean unchastity, and allowed divorce solely on that ground. The school of Hillel interpreted it so freely as to allow divorce for the most trivial cause, e.g. even if a man saw a woman who pleased him better.

Ver. 32. *saving . . . fornication*. The word for fornication

whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.

means illicit sexual intercourse whether before or after marriage. The context seems to decide here for after marriage. But in Mark x. 11, Luke xvi. 18, divorce is disallowed by Christ, without any exception. In Matt. xix. 9, "except it be for fornication" seems clearly out of place in the argument, and the probability is that here also it is a modification of Christ's saying due to the First Evangelist or to the circles from which he derived the saying. It seems clear from Matt. xix. 3-9, Mark x. 2-12, that Jesus took the high, ideal view of marriage, and held marriage after divorce for any reason to be sin.

*causeth her.* Assuming that she marries another. *committeth adultery.* Since she is ideally, though not legally, bound to her first husband.

In this verse Jesus speaks as the protector of the woman, regarding the divorcing husband as the cause of her sin. But in Mark x. 12 Jesus speaks of a woman divorcing her husband—a practice which may not have been unknown, though it was contrary to Jewish law—and this shows that the tie is equally binding on both sides.

### V. 33-37. THIRD EXAMPLE—OATHS.

33 Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old  
time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto  
34 the Lord thine oaths: but I say unto you, Swear not at all:

Ver. 33. Taken roughly from Lev. xix. 12, Num. xxx. 2, Deut. xx. 21. It is a commandment not against swearing, but against false swearing. The oath taken before the Lord is a debt contracted with God, and can only be paid to God by performing the vow.

Ver. 34. Oaths as expletives are not here in view, but oaths as assurances of truth. Also the oaths He speaks of are not oaths before a court of law, but oaths in the common intercourse of life. What He has before Him is the Pharisaical casuistical distinctions between oaths taken solemnly in God's very name, which were held altogether binding, and oaths by things of varying importance, which were held only more or less and sometimes not at all binding. Jesus shows that everything derives its importance from its connection with God, and therefore an oath by anything is an oath by God. *throne . . . footstool*, as declared in Isa. lxvi. 1. *the city . . . King*, as in Ps. xlviii. 2. But even where the O.T. does not state its connection with God, as in the case of swearing by one's head, the reference to God is obviously involved, for the changing

35 neither by heaven ; for it is God's throne : nor by the earth ;  
 for it is his footstool : neither by Jerusalem ; for it is the city  
 36 of the great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head,  
 37 because thou canst not make one hair white or black. But  
 let your communication be, Yea, yea ; Nay, nay : for what-  
 soever is more than these cometh of evil.

of the hair from the black of youth to the white of age is the work of God.

Ver. 37. But Jesus will not allow any oath at all, nothing at most beyond a reaffirmation of yes or no. Some think that even this is not meant, but "let your word yes be (a real) yes and your word no (a real) no," which would make it correspond to Jas. v. 12. As the saying stands, probably the reaffirmation is what it says. But the essential meaning is that a man's word should of itself be the simple truth. Oaths lead men to think that there are varying degrees of truth, and the thought is morally hurtful. *whatsoever . . . evil*. Not that the man who adds an oath is moved by the evil or the Evil One within him, but that the need for it is due to the distrust produced by the influence of evil or of the Evil One in the world. He stands for simple truthfulness, the sacredness of a word = truth.

#### V. 38-42. FOURTH EXAMPLE—RETAIATION.

38 Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and  
 39 a tooth for a tooth : but I say unto you, That ye resist not  
 evil ; but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn

Ver. 38. The motive of the law quoted verbatim from Ex. xxi. 24 was not revenge, but the fixing of an exact equivalent as legal compensation or punishment for the damage done. In the O.T. itself the spirit of individual revenge and retaliation is expressly forbidden (cf. Lev. xix. 18 ; Prov. xxiv. 29).

Ver. 39. *resist not evil* ; or the Evil One. The difference is immaterial, but in the following illustrations it is the pressure of the evil-doer and of the needy (= sufferer from evil) which is in view. "Resist not" is the negative side of the spirit of love, whose positive side Jesus proceeds to illustrate. On its negative side it is meek, patient, unresentful, ready to renounce rights ; but the object of that is only seen on its positive side, the overcoming of evil with good. The examples given are not, of course, the exact actions to be copied, but illustrations of the spirit in action. He does not think of His principle as merely ideal and at present impracticable, though in concrete cases it will often be difficult to know what the requisite action is. This difficulty, indeed, with Christ can only be solved by the guidance of the Spirit, and makes religion absolutely

40 to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also.  
 41 And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him  
 42 twain. Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.

essential. Further, Jesus is only dealing directly with the individual who can freely determine his own actions in his own life, not with the individual who represents a cause, nor, as Tolstoy imagines, with the magistrate whose duty it is to inflict punishment or extract compensation. But the principles which govern the individual life must ultimately be the principles which govern society. The right of the individual Jesus does not deny; but He calls on His disciples to renounce their rights—only, however, that they may overcome evil with good. This is the Higher Righteousness. The command is certainly given to the disciples as the spirit essential to missionaries whose object is to win men. But that is the object of every Christian life.

Five illustrations are given: Love overcoming the evil of (1) insult, (2) extortion, (3) compulsion, (4) the beggar's, (5) the borrower's need.

(1) Insult—*whosoever . . . cheek*. To smite on the cheek was a common form of gross insult (cf. 1 Kings xxii. 24; Matt. xxvi. 67). The right cheek is mentioned first, though it would not naturally be struck first, simply because the right side was held the more important (cf. ver. 29). *turn . . . also*. Mere meek endurance might seem pusillanimity, or want of self-respect, or confession of guilt; but the voluntary inviting of further insult betokens a spirit that cannot be hurt by insult, and so insult is reduced to impotence.

Ver. 40. (2) Extortion. *coat*=the under garment or tunic, the shirt. *cloak*=the outer robe worn above it. A creditor was allowed to take the less necessary *coat* as a pledge for debt, but the *cloak*, a large piece of cloth like a plaid, used as a blanket by night, if given as a pledge, the creditor must return in the evening. The debt may be legal or presumably here illegal, but rather than strive with him in a law court, give him even more than his real or supposed rights. Thus extortion also is reduced to absurdity.

Ver. 41. (3) Compulsion. The word "compel" is the word used originally of the power of the Imperial couriers in the Persian postal system, and later in the Roman Empire of soldiers, to impress men, beasts, or conveyances for transport purposes along the route travelled. It signifies unpaid forced service. Instead of rebelling, render double service, and so prove that love is the greatest force.

Ver. 42. (4, 5) Need. The beggar and the borrower are evil sufferers who press their need on the disciple. It is not necessary to

make this saying enjoin indiscriminate giving. The principle is that love responds to the needy simply because they are needy, renouncing all right of refusal, but it is not stated in what way it will meet the need. The whole section means, Love seeks the good of another, regardless of his response, his character, or anything. Its motive is in itself.

### V. 43-48. FIFTH EXAMPLE—LOVE.

43 Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy  
 44 neighbour, and hate thine enemy: but I say unto you, Love  
     your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them  
     that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you,  
 45 and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your  
     Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on  
     the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and  
 46 on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what

Ver. 43. *Thou . . . neighbour* (Lev. xix. 18). *hate . . . enemy* is nowhere found in so many words, but expresses the temper of much of the O.T. In Lev. xix. 18 neighbour=fellow-Israelite. The foreigner who settled in Israel was also to be treated with love (Lev. xix. 34). But under the feeling of being the chosen people of God, destined to rule the world, strengthened by such words as Ex. xxiii. 22, 23, the attitude of the people had become one of hatred towards foreigners; and this spirit of hate reached its intensest form in the Pharisaic party, who were bigoted patriots.

Ver. 44. *your enemies*. Not merely foreigners and not simply private enemies—the O.T. itself rose above the private enmity of Israelite with Israelite (cf. Ex. xxiii. 4, 5; Job xxxi. 29, etc.)—but, as *persecute* shows, any who hate or hurt you as my disciples. “Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you” is all that is found in the best MSS. The rest is added from Luke vi. 27, which makes the universal meaning of Christ’s words still more explicit. “He that prays for his enemy can do anything for him.”

Ver. 45. The reason for this universal love Jesus finds in God’s kindness in Nature to all irrespective of character. Jesus does not infer from this action in Nature moral indifference in God, as some do, but love to man as man for love’s sake. *children of your Father*. Or *sons*=like God in disposition—a moral and spiritual, not a physical or metaphysical relationship.

Ver. 46. *reward*—i.e. in heaven, to be paid by God (cf. ver. 12). The love which merely responds to others’ love is already paid by their love.

“Paid by the world, what dost thou owe  
 Me?”—God might question; now instead,  
 ’Tis God shall repay: I am safer so.”—BROWNING.

47 reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others?  
 48 do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

*even the publicans.* The publicans collected the custom dues on exports, leased to them by the Roman Government for a fixed sum. When the revenue exceeded that sum, the excess was the publicans' profit; when it fell short, the deficiency was their loss. The system lent itself easily to abuse. The real publicans were Roman Knights. The tax-gatherers of the Gospels are their subordinates, partly foreigners, partly Jews. They were regarded as the lowest and most despicable class, partly because of their notorious extortion, partly because they were so mean and unpatriotic as to become the agents of the hated foreigner.

Ver. 47. The salutation of the East, "Peace be with thee," was at once an expression of kindness and a religious benediction. *brethren.* Not brother man, but those of the same nation or class. As applied to the disciples, it would mean your fellow-disciples (cf. love of the brethren=fellow-Christians): *more than others*—literally, what exceeding thing—*i.e.* exceeding the ordinary, uncommon. For *publicans* read Gentiles, equivalent to our Pagans. Human nature at its lowest, within (ver. 46) or without (ver. 47) the chosen people, loves those who love it.

Ver. 48. *perfect*=realising one's end. Here, not as commonly in the O.T., "without a stain on the character," but perfect in love. Love, as God does, who loves not because He is loved, but for His own name's sake, *i.e.* for love's sake, and therefore treats all alike from the standpoint of love. Such love, whose motive is in itself, is the end of a Christian and the essential interpretation of the Higher Righteousness of the Sermon on the Mount. It is by no means beyond our ultimate reach, so be we wish to reach it, and seek guidance and help from above, and live in fellowship with Christ and in unceasing prayer.

## VI. 1-18. THE SANCTITY OF THE SPRINGS OF LIFE.

I TAKE heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them; otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which

Ver. 1. *Alms.* Read *righteousness*, with the best MSS. In this verse Jesus enunciates the principle, and then illustrates it by what to the Pharisees were the three chief "good works"—almsgiving, prayer, and fasting. So high did they rank almsgiving, that they called it righteousness (cf. "charity," which originally meant love). But in ver. 1 righteousness is used in the wide sense of doing what is right. *before men.* No contradiction of ver. 16. It is the



- 2 is in heaven. Therefore, when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth; that thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly. And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. 6 But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.

motive to be seen of men, self-glorification, theatrical goodness, which is condemned.

Vers. 2-4. ALMSGIVING.—Ver. 2. *sound a trumpet*—metaphorical for attracting attention. *hypocrites*—i.e. the Pharisees: so ver. 5. Originally used of actors on the Greek stage who wore masks, it denotes in the Gospels those whose motive is not what should naturally be assumed from the act, whether the hypocrisy be conscious or unconscious. Alms were collected on the Sabbath in the synagogues.

*They have.* A strong expression—"in full." There is no future reward (cf. v. 12, 46). The glory of the world is all their reward.

Ver. 3. A proverbial expression for a pure love-impulse, without premeditation, calculation, or self-consciousness.

Ver. 4. *in secret.* Unknown to the world, and therefore bringing no worldly reward. The object of the secrecy is to guard the sanctity of the motive, to keep the springs pure.

*Openly* to be deleted here and in vers. 6 and 18, after the best MSS. An open reward from God, which would require men's knowledge of the reason for it, would contradict Jesus' meaning. *Himself.* Not necessarily a purely spiritual reward, though that may be the essential part. *shall.* Here, or, as in v. 12, in heaven, or both.

Vers. 5-6. PRAYER.—Ver. 5. *standing.* The commonest Jewish posture in prayer, though kneeling and prostration were also practised. It is not the posture but the spirit which is condemned. *the synagogues . . . streets*—the gathering-place of men. The corners of the streets=where broad streets crossed. They might be overtaken in the street by the fixed hour of prayer, or so arrange it to win a reputation for devoutness.

Ver. 6. *when . . . prayest.* No fixed hour, whenever moved to pray. *closet.* Any room where there is privacy. Jesus does not speak against public prayer, but shows from private prayer what is the essential of true prayer—all forgotten in the thought of God. *shut*

- 7 But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do : for they think that they shall be heard for their much  
 8 speaking. Be not ye therefore like unto them : for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask  
 9 him. After this manner therefore pray ye : Our Father

*thy door*—to avoid any risk of being surprised, and have the feeling of security from observation which makes concentration on God easier.

Vers. 7-15 interrupt the thought of vers. 1-6, 16-18, and are probably inserted by Matthew here. Vers. 7, 8 are a preface to the Lord's Prayer, for which Luke xi. 1 gives another setting.

Vers. 7-8. *vain repetitions*. The meaning of the word is not known. It is supposed to be an onomatopoeic word imitating a stammerer, and explained by "much speaking." It is directed not against the Pharisees but against the heathen. Endless repetition of the same words and formulæ and titles was a common heathen practice, under the idea of wearying the Deity into granting the request. But the Pharisees also were given to long prayers (Matt. xxiii. 14). There is a stammering in prayer due to an inability to utter the needs and the thoughts that arise in one, which would not be condemned (cf. Rom. viii. 26), and there is an importunity in prayer commended by Jesus (Luke xi. 8). His objection is to the meaningless babbling which expects that the mere babbling, apart from the spirit, can move God.

Ver. 8. The idea of true prayer is not to tell God what He knows already, but (vers. 9-13) to seek through personal intercourse with Him the spirit of a loving, trustful son, desiring and willing only the fulfilment of our Father's purposes.

Vers. 9-13. THE LORD'S PRAYER.—Ver. 9. *After this manner*. The prayer is not meant to be a fixed formula, but the model of all prayer.

*Our Father*. The O.T. occasionally rose to the thought of God as Father (cf. Isa. lxiii. 16, lxiv. 7, etc.). The individual also, as in the lyrical psalms, felt himself personally related to God ; yet this feeling sprang out of his consciousness of being a member of the community of Israel. Cut off from the people of God, he felt cut off from God. Jesus revealed Fatherhood to be the supreme conception of God, and He made the personal relationship of the individual dependent not on race connection, nor on membership in any community—whether Israel, or the Church, or mankind—but solely on the presence of the filial spirit in the individual. But this spirit was mediated through Himself (Matt. xi. 27, 30), as in the O.T. it was mediated through Israel. The connection of the individual with Christ is therefore vital. Prayer is the necessary expression of this filial spirit. Yet in all prayer, whether private or social, we are to pray with the consciousness of being members of the family of God. Consequently, we are not to pray for any personal interest which would conflict with the interests of the other members.

10 which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom  
 11 come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give  
 12 us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as

*which . . . heaven*—lit. "the heavens," *i.e.* the transcendent One. As Father, He is willing to hear a prayer for what will bless the family; as the all-transcending One, He is able to answer it.

*Hallowed . . . name*—*i.e.* in earth. Hallowed=sanctified, revered. The name=the revealed character of God. It is a prayer for the reverence of God revealed as Father and as the all-transcending One. As all life is God's and to be lived unto Him, this is a prayer for the spirit of consecration. The peculiar sacredness of human life rests on this, that man is the temple of God.

Ver. 10. *Thy kingdom come*—*i.e.* in the earth. The central thought of the prayer, as of Jesus' teaching. The essential meaning is, May God—*i.e.* the God revealed by Christ—come to and reign in our hearts. But that works out a society based on the principles of Christ.

*Thy will be done.* God's name will be perfectly hallowed when the kingdom comes, and then will His will be perfectly done. But the hallowing of His name and the doing of His will are also the preparation for the kingdom (cf. iii. 2, iv. 17). The petition is a prayer for the spirit of obedient activity, and identification of all human effort with the purposes of God. Life is service, and duty is the guide.

*in earth, as it is in heaven.* To be taken with each of the three petitions. The reference *in heaven* is specially to the angels (cf. Ps. ciii. 20).

Vers. 11-13. The first three petitions are for the supremacy of God in the inner and outer life of man; the second three are for the satisfaction of the needs of man, not as an end in itself, but as the necessary and preparatory condition for the final supremacy of God.

Ver. 11. Prompted by the instinct of self-preservation and by the consciousness of dependence on God for physical life; not by the desire for gain, but by the desire to live in order to do God's will. Therefore no more is asked than what is necessary to be able to do God's will. *daily.* The meaning of the Greek word is uncertain. It has been taken to mean "bread of the coming day." But this does not agree with ver. 34. It is best taken as a reminiscence of Prov. xxx. 8, "bread that is needful." This is the essential meaning, even though we take the word in a temporal sense, "our bread of the day," or "of the coming day." *bread* includes all that is needful for the sustenance of the physical life. *this day* may have been original, limiting the prayer to immediate needs, or it may be due to the daily liturgical use of the prayer. The *day by day* of Luke xi. 3 shows that the petition had not yet acquired complete fixity of expression.

Ver. 12 expresses the consciousness of spiritual dependence and the need of a right personal relation to God, for the free and

13 we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation,  
 but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the  
 14 power, and the glory, for ever. Amen. For if ye forgive  
 men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive  
 15 you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will  
 16 your Father forgive your trespasses. Moreover, when ye fast,  
 be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they dis-  
 figure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast.  
 17 Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou,  
 when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face;  
 18 that thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father

perfect doing of His will. *debts*. Moral debts, viewed as unpayable. Forgiveness of sins, man's great spiritual need. Consciousness of guilt makes fellowship with God, responsive sympathy with Him, and the free life of the spirit, impossible. *as we forgive*. The better reading is *as we have forgiven*. Forgiving our fellows is the condition of being forgiven by God. *As* does not mean "in the measure" or "manner in which" nor "because we forgive," but simply that the forgiving spirit alone can hope to be forgiven.

Ver. 13 expresses the spirit of humility, our consciousness of moral weakness, and need of Divine guidance and help.

*temptation*. Not evil solicitation—in that sense God tempts no one (cf. Jas. i. 13)—but moral trial, a condition of things in which we are tested, and may easily fall. *but*—"but in any case." Trial may be necessary. The disciple, however, conscious of his moral weakness, cannot seek to be tested; but if it should be necessary, in any case deliver us from the evil in the world that threatens the soul. *The evil* may be either neuter, Evil, or masculine, "the Evil One." *for . . . Amen*. This doxology is a liturgical addition to the original prayer (cf. 1 Chron. xxix. 11).

Vers. 14, 15. A saying of Christ, spoken probably in another connection (cf. xviii. 35), and inserted here from their similarity to ver. 12.

Vers. 16-18. FASTING.—Fasting, a natural consequence of deep sorrow, was made by the Pharisees a systematic act of piety in itself, irrespective of the actual feeling. They fasted twice a week, on Mondays and Thursdays, the days when Moses was supposed to have ascended and descended from Sinai. The Synagogue met on those days, and thus they had an opportunity of showing off their fasting. The divorce between feeling and expression, the root of hypocrisy, was accentuated by this ostentatious motive. *disfigure . . . appear*. A play upon words in the Greek: *disfigure*, that they may figure, make their (real) faces disappear that their fasting faces may appear. The disfiguring consisted in not washing nor anointing themselves, and in sprinkling ashes on their heads. *anoint*. As was done when one went to a feast (Luke vii. 46; Ps. xxiii. 5).

Ver. 18. *appear not*. This may seem hypocrisy also, though of

which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.

a noble kind. But fasting as a religious practice is in view, *i.e.* as an expression of sorrow for sin and of the humility of penitence. This is an affair between God and the soul, and loses its virtue when it is not a carefully guarded secret. The humility that airs itself is the pride that apes humility. *openly* to be deleted (cf. ver. 4).

## VI. 19-34. WARNINGS AGAINST MATERIALISM.

19 Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and  
20 steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not  
21 break through nor steal: for where your treasure is, there  
22 will your heart be also. The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of  
23 light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be dark-

Vers. 19-21. AGAINST MATERIAL HOARDING, WHICH STEALS THE HEART FROM THE SPIRITUAL.—*treasures*. Material. *moth*. The Oriental loved to store up fine embroidered garments. They were then liable to be moth-eaten. *rust*. "Corrosion"—a general term for all that eats away articles of value. *break through*. Dig through the mud walls of Eastern houses.

*in heaven*. Spiritual, and therefore imperishable, riches which are stored up in the transcendent world, distinct from the reward given by God spoken of in v. 12. Cf. "all that we have willed or hoped or dreamed of good shall exist" (Browning).

Jesus does not forbid saving for a good purpose. He states the general principle, leaving out exceptions, as is His way. But it is more than miserliness which He forbids. It is the concentration of desire and effort upon the accumulation of wealth, the making of the material means the end and aim of life. The life is ruled by the heart, and the heart follows its ideal.

Vers. 22-23. AGAINST NIGGARDLINESS, WHICH SHUTS OUT THE GUIDING LIGHT OF LIFE.—*the light*. "Lamp." The material eye is regarded as a lamp, which receives material light; and it is compared with the spiritual eye, which receives spiritual light, illuminating the inner personality. *single*. Sound. In this context, it means generous, as in 2 Cor. viii. 2. *thy whole body*. In reference to the spiritual eye, the whole inner personality. *evil*—*i.e.* diseased, in this context, "niggardly." *darkness*. Because the light of the false ideal is spiritual darkness. *how great*. Because it is not known to be darkness, yet it

24 ness, how great is that darkness! No man can serve two  
 masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other;  
 or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye  
 25 cannot serve God and mammon. Therefore I say unto you,  
 Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye  
 shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is  
 not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?  
 26 Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they  
 reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth  
 27 them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you,

does not give the soul a gleam of true guidance. Every step is a stumbling in the dark mountains.

Ver. 24. AGAINST A DIVIDED HEART.—The two masters are the treasure upon earth and the treasure in heaven, the material and the spiritual ideal which claim the heart. The latter is the reality, God; the former is Mammon—a personification of riches, not an ultimate Reality, only a man-made God. *serve*. “Be a slave to.” A slave was the absolute property of his master. When two claim him, his heart will be devoted only to one; or if he have no personal preference, he will for other reasons attach himself to one. It is not the possession of wealth, but slavery to it, which is incompatible with allegiance to God. For generous giving (ver. 22, v. 42) has no meaning, unless what one gives is one’s own.

Vers. 25-34. AGAINST ANXIOUS CARE, BECAUSE IT IS MIS-UNDERSTANDING AND MISTRUST OF GOD.—Ver. 25. *Therefore*. Since it is impossible to serve the two masters, serve God without distraction. *Take no thought*. Have no anxious care. Thought in old English meant anxiety. It is not labour nor forethought, but worry, which is forbidden. Meat, drink, and clothing are the common necessities of life. *more than*. Because these only sustain the pre-existing life, and provide the opportunity for what is really life. The idea will be, “Can He who gave the greater not be trusted to give the less?” (cf. Rom. viii. 32).

Ver. 26. The birds search (*i.e.* work) for food but they do not produce it. Jesus as usual states the general principle, without qualification, that food is provided for the living. Famine for birds is the exception. *your heavenly Father*. Only a Providence to the birds, and yet so kind; to you a Father. *much better*. As children of God, standing far higher in His loving care than the mere creatures.

Ver. 27. *stature*. The word can mean *stature* or *age*. The latter is to be preferred. It is not his height but the length of his life which a man tries to extend. Anxiety only shortens life. But the thought is rather that God has fixed the limits of our life (cf. Ps. xc. 10). Life is more than meat because it is dependent upon God not only for its sustenance but for its length. For the use of *cubit*

28 by taking thought, can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they toil not, neither do they spin: 29 and yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory 30 was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O 31 ye of little faith? Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal 32 shall we be clothed? (for after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye 33 have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be

(the distance from the elbow joint to the tip of the middle finger, reckoned  $1\frac{1}{2}$  feet) to measure length of days, compare the use of handbreadth in Ps. xxxix. 5. It is so used also by Mimnermus.

Ver. 28. *lilies*. Perhaps the red anemone, which grows under the thorn bushes; more probably a generic name for all flowers of the lily species (cf. Cant. iv. 5).

*how . . . grow*. Exclamation of admiration. *toil not*. Of a man's laborious efforts. *spin not*. The woman's lighter work.

Ver. 29. *Solomon*. The type of worldly magnificence (2 Chron. ix. 15 ff.). Josephus says that Solomon rode in his chariot "clothed in white." *like . . . these*. Nature's simple dress beats all comparison. Note Jesus' taste for the simple and His love of natural beauty.

Ver. 30. *the grass*. By contrast with the imperishable worth of the children of God, the lilies are slumped with the mere grass, type of the insignificant and ephemeral (Isa. xl. 6). *cast . . . oven*. The grass withered by the burning desert wind was used as fuel. The oven was an earthenware vessel, narrow at the top, within which the fuel was placed. Cakes to be baked were laid on its sides. *of little faith*. Tender, half-reproachful, half-pitying (cf. xiv. 31). Faith here is trust in God as Father.

Ver. 32. *Gentiles*. Not all Gentiles, but Gentiles as known to the Jews. A Socrates or a Gautama were not worldly men. The saying simply means that the spirit of materialism is heathenish, not the spirit of true religion.

*for*. Through their filial consciousness, the disciples know that they stand in a different personal relation to God from that in which the heathen stand. God, who as their Father is willing, and as heavenly—*i.e.* transcending the secular order—is able, to meet their needs, knows their physical necessities.

Ver. 33 sums up this whole section. *first*. Not first in time, but first as the ruling aim of every action. The original form is found in Luke xii. 31: "seek ye the kingdom of God." The things of the world are not to be sought at all, not even secondarily. They are to be

34 added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow : for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

added by God, *i.e.* they are given in the course of the one endeavour to reach the kingdom. *and his (i.e. God's) righteousness.* Added by Matthew because the true righteousness has been the subject of so much of the Sermon. To seek the kingdom, *i.e.* to seek to be ruled by God, is the same thing as to seek His righteousness, *i.e.* to seek a life that is right with God.

Ver. 34. Repetition in another form of the same counsel to be trustful. The presence of evil—not moral but physical—is admitted. *unto the day.* “For each day.” Do not double the misery by adding to-morrow’s to to-day’s. Each day’s evil is enough by itself. Take it as it comes. Each day will solve its own misery. There is a remedy, but it is not given in advance. The word has nothing to say against wise forethought and provision of good before the need for it arises, though the true provision is the fulfilment of the day’s duty, including self-denial and the maintenance of the spirit of trustfulness (cf. the parables of the Virgins and the Talents, chap. xxv.).

## VII. 1-5. FAULT-FINDING.

1 JUDGE not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment  
2 ye judge, ye shall be judged : and with what measure ye  
3 mete, it shall be measured to you again. And why beholdest  
4 thou the mote that is in thy brother’s eye, but considerest not  
the beam that is in thine own eye ? Or how wilt thou say to  
thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye ; and,

Ver. 1. *Judge not.* Not of discriminating character, but of passing adverse judgment on the faults of others, exposing them in the spirit of censoriousness—a Pharisaic habit. *be not judged—i.e.* by God at the final Judgment (cf. v. 7). It is also true that men judge leniently those who are lenient in their judgment, but that is not the thought here.

Ver. 2. *with what measure.* A common Jewish proverb, meaning that men will treat you as you treat them. Here the thought is, God will treat you as you treat men (cf. Ps. xviii. 25, 26).

Ver. 3. Also a Jewish proverb. *why.* If it be zeal for righteousness, why does that not make you consider your own graver condition ? The criticism which does not criticise self does not spring from the passion for righteousness. *mote.* A small particle of wood or straw. *beam.* A wooden joist. Oriental hyperbole, depicting the grotesque moral absurdity.

Ver. 4. *how.* If it be a desire to make another better, how is it morally possible ? How can you have the face to say ?



5 behold, a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.

Ver. 5. *hypocrite*. This supposed zeal for righteousness, and desire to make another better, is only the mask of the play-actor covering the real motive.

## VII. 6. THE NEED FOR MORAL DISCRIMINATION.

6 Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.

Ver. 6. If the saying stands here in its original setting, which seems hardly probable, the connection of thought would be, Do not find fault in a censorious spirit, but do exercise discrimination in your actions. *that . . . holy, pearls*—like religious experience and truth. In xiii. 46 the kingdom itself is called a pearl of great price. *dogs, swine*. Unclean animals. The heathen were “dogs” to the Jews. Applied to men whose spirits are utterly repugnant to what is counted by disciples most holy and most precious. *trample . . . you*. Finding that repugnant which they expected would be delicious food, they trample it in disappointed rage and heap vile abuse on the giver, whose well-intentioned but indiscriminating action has only led to the provocation of evil passions and the profanation of the holiest.

## VII. 7-11. PRAYER.

7 Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find;  
8 knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him  
9 that knocketh it shall be opened. Or what man is there of  
10 you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or  
11 if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being

Not probably originally in the Sermon; found in another connection, Luke xi. 1-13. The only apparent reason for its insertion here is the need of Divine help and fellowship to live the life of the Sermon.

Ver. 7. Prayer described as a simple asking, a persistent seeking for what is missed, a knocking to gain entrance at the door of God, within whom the life desired is found.

Vers. 9, 10. If something different from what is asked be given, there will be no mockery, as if a useless thing, a stone, or a hurtful thing, a serpent, were given. A stone resembles a cake of bread, and a serpent a fish. *Serpent* may refer to a fish without scales found in the Sea of Galilee and thrown away by fishermen. There would then be no idea of hurtfulness, but only uselessness.

Ver. 11. *evil*. No notion of the total depravity of human nature—simply in contrast with God, who is absolutely good (cf. xix. 17).

evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him !

*γνωστω ἡστω*—have the wisdom which springs out of regard to the welfare of your children.

## VII. 12. THE GOLDEN RULE.

- 12 Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them : for this is the Law and the Prophets.

*Therefore.* Luke vi. 30 makes it follow Matt. v. 42. It is not clear what the immediate connection here is, but it is a summary of the teaching of the Sermon from v. 17, as is indicated by "for this is the Law and the Prophets," referring back to the starting-point (v. 17). The Rule in its negative form was stated by Rabbi Hillel, "What thou hatest, do not to any one," by Confucius, "Do not to others what you would not wish done to yourself," and by others. But the obligation to do good, and not merely refrain from doing evil, is a new moral ideal. The Rule is not absolutely a guide, as we often desire others to do to us what is not good. But the one person we never willingly hurt is ourself, and to place ourselves in the position of another and see how it feels is essential that we may know what to do and have the heart to do it. *this is.* It is what the "do nots" of the Law and the "do this" of the Prophets aimed at, though it was never clearly seen by them to be the universal principle of human relationships.

## VII. 13, 14. THE TWO WAYS.

- 13 Enter ye in at the strait gate : for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be  
14 which go in thereat : because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

The idea of entrance into the kingdom is depicted in two common metaphors—"gate"=door in Luke xiii. 24, and "way." The way is not the way beyond the gate, but the way through the gate. The two are identical. The way (=a manner of life after the Sermon) is a gate, *i.e.* an entrance into the kingdom, which continues through life till the kingdom come (cf. 2 Pet. i. 11). *narrow*—lit. "compressed," "squeezed together." This straitness is due to the repentance, conversion, self-sacrifice, renunciation of the world, surrender of will to God, etc., required in following the principles laid down by Christ, though when our heart is with them the straitness is not felt (cf. Prov. iv. 12 ; Matt. xi. 30). *wide . . . way*—"the gate" is here to be omitted with the best MSS ; only the one metaphor is used, though that makes no difference. "Wide and roomy is the way." *leadeth to destruction.* The climax of a tendency making

not for annihilation but for a state which is the antithesis of life in the kingdom (ver. 14). *go in therat*—"go into the state of destruction through it," i.e. through the way. *because*. Giving the reason why many go in through the wide way. *leadeth unto life*. Life in the fullest sense, the blessed eternal life enjoyed in the kingdom. *find it*—"it" = the gate or the way, both being the same. The gate is not only hard to go through but hard to find, as it is only found by hearing and obeying the Spirit of God as He calls in the duty of the moment. The duty seems often insignificant, and the call of the Spirit is often a still small voice. But Luke xii. 32 has to be remembered.

## VII. 15-23. FALSE PROPHETS AND FALSE CHRISTIANS.

15 Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's cloth-  
 16 ing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know  
 them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or  
 17 figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth  
 18 good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A  
 good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt  
 19 tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not  
 20 forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Where-  
 21 fore by their fruits ye shall know them. Not every one that  
 saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of  
 heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is

A prophet, in the N.T. sense of a revealer of God's will, not a foreteller of future events, reveals the gate so hard to find. *sheep's clothing*. Referring to the dress worn by prophets (cf. Heb. xi. 37), but the idea here is "like a sheep outwardly," the type of gentle, harmless innocence (cf. xxv. 33). *ravening wolves*—animated by some selfish lust, as greed of power or money (cf. Jer. vi. 13; Isa. lvi. 11).

Ver. 16. *know*—"discern exactly." *fruits*. The ethical results not merely in their own but also in other lives. *grapes—thistles*. There were thorns which produced grape-like fruits and thistle-heads like figs, but men did not mistake the semblance for the reality.

Ver. 19 interrupts the thought, how to discern true and false prophets, and looks as though it were imported from iii. 10. As it stands it speaks of the destruction of the false prophets. *cast into the fire*—i.e. used as firewood.

Ver. 21. *Lord*. "Lord" was a title of dignity given to a Jewish teacher. That is its meaning in Luke vi. 46, probably the original form of the saying, which is there spoken of disciples generally. Here, as clearly in ver. 22, it has the full later meaning of the Exalted Lord. To call Jesus "Lord" is to profess to be a Christian (cf. 1 Cor. xii. 3). The repetition of the word expresses intensity of spirit. *my Father*—"my," for the first time in this Gospel, indicates an unique relation to God. Jesus is the true Prophet (= Revealer of God's will), because He is the Son of God (xi. 27), possessed of an unique know-

22 in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful  
23 works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you : depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

ledge of God, through an unique spiritual affinity with Him. "The will of my Father" is the will revealed by Christ in the Sermon. The confession of the Lordship of Christ takes no one through the strait gate (=entrance into the kingdom), only the doing of the will (=obedience to the principles of Christ).

Vers. 22, 23. What was said (ver. 21) of all disciples is now applied to the false prophets. *in that day*. The day of the judgment preceding the inauguration of the kingdom. Prophesying, casting out devils, doing wonderful works (=miracles), were gifts of the Spirit in the apostolic age (cf. 1 Cor. xii. 10). The stress is on the thrice-repeated *in thy name*. *profess*—"confess," of one who openly speaks what had been a secret (cf. x. 32). *I never knew you*. Of the personal knowledge springing from spiritual affinity. Jesus recognises spiritual affinity with Himself, not in power derived from Him and exercised successfully, any more than in lip-confession of His Lordship, but only in similarity of character, in the filial spirit obedient to the Will which He Himself obeyed. *depart*. Moral revulsion (Ps. vi. 8). *iniquity*. "lawlessness" suggests the antinomian tendencies of the later time, the lawlessness falsely called "freedom," to which the ecstatic type of religion is always prone.

#### VII. 24-27. SIMILITUDE OF THE TWO HOUSES.

24 Therefore, whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built  
25 his house upon a rock : and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house ;  
26 and it fell not : for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house  
27 upon the sand : and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house ; and it fell : and great was the fall of it.

This is a conclusion to the whole Sermon, and is reminiscent of Ezek. xiii. 10-15. Jesus does not regard His sayings as impracticable, but as the bed-rock of truth : alone able to make a man strong enough to stand the strain of life. *wise*. Of that practical wisdom which does the right thing for the purpose in view. *a rock*—"the rock," i.e. the ground-rock. *the floods*. The rivers rising in flood and threatening to wash away the foundations. *great*. Describing not the greatness of the house but the completeness of the ruin.

## VII. 28, 29. THE IMPRESSION MADE BY THE SERMON.

28 And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings,  
29 the people were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

It is taken from Mark i. 22, with the addition of Matthew's formula of transition, *And . . . sayings. doctrine*—teaching. *authority*. The authority resting on consciousness of knowledge or of a commission, here springing out of Jesus' own consciousness. His direct intuition of the truth, contrasted with the second-hand information of the scribes, who had no independence of conviction, no feeling of having a direct message given them by God, but rested on the written word and the oral tradition of the Elders, the sayings of famous Rabbis.

## VIII.-IX. 34. A GROUP OF STRIKING DEEDS, REVEALING HIS POWER AND SPIRIT.

## VIII. 1-4. THE LEPER.

1 WHEN he was come down from the mountain, great multi-  
2 tudes followed him. And, behold, there came a leper and worshipped him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make  
3 me clean. And Jesus put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou clean. And immediately his  
4 leprosy was cleansed. And Jesus saith unto him, See thou

Ver. 2. *leper*. Leprosy was one of the most dreaded and loathsome diseases. *worshipped*. Cf. n. on ii. 11. *Lord*. The higher title for Rabbi. Matthew's and Luke's predilection for it—in Mark it occurs only twice—may be due to the influence of the later idea of Christ as the Exalted Lord. *wilt*. He has no doubt of Jesus' power. *make me clean*—i.e. by healing me.

Ver. 3. *touched*. The fearless, sympathetic touch conveying the healing power, and awakening the necessary faith. Leprosy was held contagious, and to touch a leper made one ceremonially unclean. But Jesus felt neither fear nor revulsion, and the fact that Jesus touched him would be a revelation of love to the leper. *I will*. Immediate and decided response, confirming the faith awakened by the touch on the one point—Jesus' willingness—the leper was in doubt of. The personal touch backed by the personal word cures doubt as well as disease.

Ver. 4. *tell no man*. The silence is enjoined until the constituted authorities have given their verdict on the case. *the priest*. Generic for the priests, who alone had authority to pronounce him clean and remove the social stigma. *offer the gift*. Cf. Lev. xiv. *a testimony*

tell no man ; but go thy way, show thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.

*unto them*—*i.e.* a testimony to the priests that Jesus is not hostile to the Law and the existing institutions, as was supposed. This feature of the incident, revealing Jesus' relation to the Law, may help to account for Matthew's selection of this miracle as the first to be recorded after the Sermon on the Mount (cf. v. 17).

### VIII. 5-13. THE CENTURION'S SERVANT.

- 5 And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came  
6 unto him a centurion, beseeching him, and saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented.  
7 And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him.  
8 The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof : but speak the word  
9 only, and my servant shall be healed. For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me : and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth ; and to another, Come, and he cometh ;

Vers. 5, 6. *centurion*. A Gentile officer in the army of Herod Antipas. *Lord*. Cf. ver. 2. *servant*—"boy"="servant" or "son"; probably "son," in view of ver. 9, where the word "slave" is used for "servant." *lieth*—"lieth prostrate," too ill to be brought to Jesus. *grievously tormented*. A specially severe case of paralysis.

Ver. 7. *I will come*. Some take it as a question, "Shall I come?" Jesus went only once to a sufferer—Jairus' daughter. It is an exceptional sign of Jesus' willingness to help—all the more marked as the man was a Gentile.

Ver. 8. *not worthy*. Modest, humble, appreciative of the exceptional kindness and condescension shown him. *speak the word only*—"only speak." No need to do more.

Ver. 9. *For I am a man under authority*. "For I also am . . ." He regards Jesus as having at His command spiritual agents who can and will carry out His orders without His moving—a fine conception of the willing, obedient discipline of the spiritual world. For an officer to do the work himself would be a signal act of grace, but quite unnecessary. But why does he say *under authority*? Is it simply his modesty which makes him call himself a subordinate officer, when another would have said, "I also am a man in authority, I also am an officer"? Or does he mean that the secret of Jesus' power rests, like his own, in an authority behind ; that as the authority of the State is behind him, and the soldiers therefore must obey, so the authority of God is behind Jesus, and the spiritual powers must obey? It is a fine thought, and would explain the re-

10 and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it. When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in  
 11 Israel. And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac,  
 12 and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven: but the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there  
 13 shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the self-same hour.

markable impression he produced on Jesus. Jesus is also a man under authority to God, obedient to God, and the whole spiritual world is like an organised and disciplined army, responsive to the command of the officer commissioned by God to execute His will.

Ver. 10. *faith*. Confidence in Christ's power to heal. *no, not in Israel*—"with no one in Israel"; not a single instance among the very people of God, the household of faith. The alien beats the insider!

Vers. 11, 12. This saying is given in another connection in Luke xiii. 28-30. It is very appropriate here. This centurion is prophetic of the welcome to be given to Christianity by the Gentiles. *many*. He is the herald to Jesus' prophetic eye of the vast harvest of heathenism, more ripe for the gospel than the privileged people. *from the east and west*—from the most different and most widely separated quarters of the world. The West has already come in crowds. The day of the East is dawning. *sit down*—"recline," as at a feast, the common symbol of the social joy of the Messianic kingdom. Faith like the centurion's gives abundant entrance. *the children of the kingdom*—i.e. those who have a natural right to the kingdom—the Jews. Cf. "a child of hell" (xxiii. 15)=one who is potentially heir of hell, in virtue of his spiritual condition. So the Rabbis spoke of "a son of the world to come." *cast out*. They are already in it, as its heirs *de jure*, not as its actual possessors, and as being in that society in the midst of which it already is in one sense, and to which it is coming in another sense. Cf. notes on xiii. 24, 41, and Appendix, Note B. The hour of ejection is the day of the judgment preceding the inauguration of the kingdom. *outer darkness, weeping and gnashing of teeth* were popular eschatological terms. Life in the Messianic kingdom was pictured sensuously as a reclining at a festive table in a lighted hall. Outside is the dark, cold night where the outcast weeps, his teeth chattering from the cold, and gnashing in the impotent rage of despair. It is a sense picture of spiritual desolation and loneliness, baffled desire and angry despair.

Ver. 13. *Go thy way*. "Go"—compressed intense command. In iv. 10 expressive of intense abhorrence, here of intense admiration.

## VIII. 14, 15. PETER'S MOTHER-IN-LAW.

14 And when Jesus was come into Peter's house, he saw his  
15 wife's mother laid, and sick of a fever. And he touched her  
hand, and the fever left her: and she arose, and ministered  
unto them.

Vers. 14, 15. *was come*—from the synagogue (Mark i. 29). *Peter*. Simon is called by his new disciple-name by anticipation. *laid*—*i.e.* in bed. *touched*. Cf. ver. 3. *ministered*. A woman's household ministry. *them*—"Him." In Mark i. 29-31 Jesus comes with His disciples. Matthew having omitted the mention of the disciples, substitutes *Him* for Mark's *them*.

## VIII. 16, 17. HEALINGS AT EVENING.

16 When the even was come, they brought unto him many that  
were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with  
17 his word, and healed all that were sick: that it might be  
fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying,  
Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses.

Ver. 16. From Mark i. 32, from which we learn that the gathering of the crowd was due to the healing of the demoniac in the synagogue. They had waited till evening, *i.e.* after sundown, when the Sabbath ended. *word*—in accordance with ver. 8. *the spirits*—*i.e.* the unclean spirits, the demons. *many . . . all*. Matthew reverses Mark i. 32, 34. It is his tendency to heighten the miraculousness of a miracle of Christ.

Ver. 17. Matthew closes his first account of the healing ministry of Christ with Isa. liii. 4, quoted from the Hebrew, not from the LXX. The "griefs" and "sorrows" of the A.V., taken by the LXX to refer to sins, mean in the Hebrew, as we have it correctly in Matthew, "sicknesses" and "pains." By His sympathetic identification of Himself with the sufferers, and by healing them, Jesus bore and took their sicknesses and pains away. But this does not necessarily exhaust the meaning of Isa. liii. 4. *that it . . . fulfilled*. Cf. i. 22. Matthew speaks of the necessity as lying in the need to fulfil the prophecy. We should say the necessity lay in Christ's loving nature and in His consciousness of His vocation, obedience to which was the fulfilment of the prophecy. It was the spontaneous love of Jesus which impelled Him to identify Himself with the distressed and to heal them, not a mechanical obedience to the prophecy, an attempt scribe-wise to make His life square with the prophecy. At the same time, Isa. liii. had a vital share in mediating to Jesus the knowledge of His vocation (cf. notes on the Baptism), and therefore Jesus would be conscious of fulfilling the prophecy.



## VIII. 18-22. THE TWO CLAIMANTS.

18 Now when Jesus saw great multitudes about him, he gave  
 19 commandment to depart unto the other side. And a certain  
 scribe came, and said unto him, Master, I will follow thee  
 20 whithersoever thou goest. And Jesus saith unto him, The  
 foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the  
 21 Son of man hath not where to lay his head. And another of  
 his disciples said unto him, Lord, suffer me first to go and  
 22 bury my father. But Jesus said unto him, Follow me; and  
 let the dead bury their dead.

Ver. 18. *gave commandment*—*i.e.* to His disciples. *the other side.* East of the Sea of Galilee.

Ver. 19. The enthusiastic volunteer. *scribe.* One of the class hostile to Jesus. *Master.* He looks on Jesus as a Rabbi, Teacher. *follow . . . goest*—thinking only of Jesus' travelling about the country, and wanting to be, like the Twelve, in constant attendance. He has fallen under the spell of Jesus, and is roused to enthusiastic devotion by His impending departure.

Ver. 20. Jesus does not question the scribe's sincerity, but his understanding and his call. He does not directly repel him, but He points out the nature of an apostolic life and leaves him to decide for himself in face of the reality. To follow Jesus is to follow One who has not the privilege of even foxes and birds, whose vocation is such that its incessant demands compel the renunciation of home and the comforts of the settled life, make Him a restless, homeless wanderer. There is no repining, nothing of the outcast's grief. For it is the penalty of the highest privilege, the privilege of being the Son of Man. But He points out how trying and hazardous a life it is to follow such an One. Only the call of God can make one equal to its demands.

*the Son of man.* Jesus' favourite name for Himself, here for the first time in Matthew. For its meaning cf. Appendix, Note C.

Ver. 21. This man is already a disciple, *i.e.* in constant attendance on Jesus; probably one of the Twelve. He gives to Jesus the higher title, "Lord" (cf. viii. 2). In Luke ix. 59 Jesus has asked him to follow Him, but here he appears as one of the disciples commanded to depart (ver. 18). *suffer.* Only a disciple in constant attendance would require to ask leave of absence. *bury.* Burial took place within twenty-four hours of death (cf. John xi. 17, 39). Some regard "bury my father" as a proverbial expression, meaning "stay at home till my father is dead." It would appear to have been used in that sense in the East, as it is occasionally among ourselves. But absence for such an indefinite period seems here quite out of place.

Ver. 22. *let . . . dead*—"let those spiritually dead (*i.e.* not alive

to the call of God in Jesus) bury their physically dead." Jesus never makes light of filial duty (cf. xv. 4-6). But when duties conflict, the lower must give way to the higher. The call of Christ sometimes conflicts with filial duty (cf. xix. 29). What made the call of Christ so urgent here we do not know. Similar cases of the duty to subordinate domestic to public claims are common in the public service.

#### VIII. 23-27. THE STORM ON THE LAKE.

- 23 And when he was entered into a ship, his disciples followed  
 24 him. And, behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea,  
 insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves: but he  
 25 was asleep. And his disciples came to him, and awoke him,  
 26 saying, Lord, save us: we perish. And he saith unto them,  
 Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and  
 rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm.  
 27 But the men marvelled, saying, What manner of man is this,  
 that even the winds and the sea obey him?

Vers. 23-25. The Lake was liable to sudden squalls. *covered*. The waves rising up hid the boat and broke over it. *asleep*. Worn out with the fatigue of the day—the reason probably why He crossed the Lake. *awoke*. Not expecting Him to still the storm, but in frantic despair turning to their Leader by instinct.

Ver. 26. *Why*. Not angry at being disturbed, but astonished at their cowardice. *fearful*—"cowardly." *little faith*. The reason for their cowardice. Faith enough to believe that Jesus could save them, but not enough to believe they were safe in Jesus' company, or because they were under God's protection; possibly both.

Jesus is still lying while He reproaches them. *arose*. Not a theatrical pose. He springs up with a sudden impulse to command, suggestive of majesty and of His fulfilling man's destiny to control nature (cf. Gen. i. 28).

Ver. 27. *the men*. Some think "men" generally, on hearing the story, but more naturally, as in Mark iv. 36, the disciples. They would then be called "men" in contrast to Him who displayed such superhuman power. *What manner*. The original meaning of the word, "From what country?" is suggestive—a man, but there is a mystery about Him.

#### VIII. 28-34. THE GADARENE DEMONIACS.

- 28 And when he was come to the other side, into the country of the Gergesenes, there met him two possessed with devils,

Ver. 28. *Gergesenes*. "Gadarenes," according to the best MSS. Mark has Gerasenes.

coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man  
 29 might pass by that way. And, behold, they cried out, saying,  
 What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God?  
 art thou come hither to torment us before the time?  
 30 And there was a good way off from them an herd of many  
 31 swine feeding. So the devils besought him, saying, If thou  
 cast us out, suffer us to go away into the herd of swine.  
 32 And he said unto them, Go. And when they were come out,  
 they went into the herd of swine: and, behold, the whole

Matthew is supposed to have substituted Gadara, six miles to the S.E., as Gerasa, thirty miles inland, is too far away. But Thomson (*Land and Book*, ii. 374) discovered a Gersa close to the Lake, which may have been the place. *two*. Mark speaks of one. Matthew is fond of duplicating. The idea that there was more than one may have been suggested by *we* (a form of multiple consciousness) in Mark v. 9. *tombs*. The limestone caves of the hills were probably used as tombs. The madmen may have frequented the tombs under the popular belief, mentioned by Josephus, that the demons in them were the souls of wicked dead men, or they may have been drawn thither by their gloomy thoughts. *fierce . . . way*. Violent madmen, making the countryside notoriously dangerous.

Ver. 29. *cried out*—in fear of what they took to be a famous exorcist. *Son of God*—in its ordinary meaning of Messiah, probably with the feeling of Divine power being resident in Him. The report of Jesus' power to exorcise demons will have reached them, and something about Jesus made them divine that this was He. *torment . . . time*. It was the current belief that the demons had power over men till the day of judgment, when the Messiah would cast them into hell to be tormented, and set up His kingdom. They dread being cast out before that time into the wilderness, seeking rest and finding none (cf. xii. 43).

Ver. 30. *a good way off*—lit. "far away" from where they stood but within sight. *swine*—forbidden to Jews, belonging to Gentiles presumably.

Ver. 31. *the devils*—i.e. the men speaking in the name of the demons. *suffer . . . swine*. Demons find no rest till they are embodied (cf. xii. 43). The Hebrews, unlike the Greeks, felt horror at the thought of being a disembodied spirit (cf. 2 Cor. v. 3, 4).

Ver. 32. *Go*. Not necessarily implying permission to enter the swine. It may only mean "Begone," "Out with you," and so there would be no need to defend Jesus from being implicated in the destruction of property. Mark v. 13, however, does implicate Jesus, but that is possibly a misinterpretation of the word Jesus used. No right of property can, however, stand in the way of saving human life. *ran . . . waters*. Some think that the demoniacs in their last paroxysm (cf. Mark i. 26), rushing about frantically among the swine, were the cause of the precipitation. In any case, all that would be

herd of swine ran violently down a steep place into the sea,  
 33 and perished in the waters. And they that kept them fled,  
 and went their ways into the city, and told every thing, and  
 34 what was befallen to the possessed of the devils. And,  
 behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus: and when  
 they saw him, they besought him that he would depart out  
 of their coasts.

seen would be the mad rush of the swine, which was ascribed to the demons. The demons overreached themselves!

Ver. 33. *fled*—because of the inexplicable rush of the swine or of the screaming demoniacs, suggesting supernatural agency to the superstitious swineherds. *told . . . devils*. A condensation of Mark, where the demoniacs' return to sanity is only known to the townsfolk when they themselves come out to Jesus.

Ver. 34. *the whole city*. Slightly hyperbolic, no doubt; though no one who heard the news would be slow to go. *besought*. Not angry, but afraid of Him who brought such a catastrophe on their countryside. The Son of Man, too, seeking rest can find none (ver. 20).

#### IX. 1-8. THE SICK OF THE PALSY.

1 AND he entered into a ship, and passed over, and came into  
 2 his own city. And, behold, they brought to him a man sick  
 of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus, seeing their faith,  
 said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, be of good cheer; thy  
 3 sins be forgiven thee. And, behold, certain of the scribes  
 4 said within themselves, This man blasphemeth. And

Ver. 1. *a ship*. The boat in which He had come. *his own city*. Capernaum, His headquarters (iv. 13). Mark also makes this incident follow a return to Capernaum, but there it is a return from a tour through Galilee, not from the other side of the Lake. The difference is due to Matthew's plan of grouping the miracles. He tacks it on to Mark v. 21.

Ver. 2. Matthew condenses Mark ii. 1-4, which reveals the strength of their faith. *their faith*—i.e. confidence in Jesus' power to heal: an example of the influence of vicarious faith. *Son . . . thee*. Son=child, expressing tender endearment. Jesus speaks to the thoughts of the paralytic, intuitively perceiving that he is depressed under a sense of guilt. His physical condition was probably due to sin, or at least the man so connects it. Forgiveness is his primary need, for his soul must first be lifted out of the depression of guilt before it can have faith to secure the healing of the body. *be*—"are." The declaration of a fact.

Vers. 3, 4. *scribes*—who were present. *blasphemeth*—because He assumes the prerogative of God to forgive sins. Jesus has indeed only announced the fact of his being forgiven, but He does claim

Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, Wherefore think ye  
 5 evil in your hearts? For whether is easier, to say, Thy sins  
 6 be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and walk? But that ye  
 may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to  
 forgive sins, (then saith he to the sick of the palsy,) Arise,  
 7 take up thy bed, and go unto thine house. And he arose,  
 8 and departed to his house. But when the multitudes saw it,  
 they marvelled, and glorified God, which had given such  
 power unto men.

(ver. 6) to have the power to forgive. *knowing their thoughts*. They had not spoken, but Jesus intuitively read their thoughts also. *think ye evil*—ascribing blasphemy to Jesus without inquiring whether Jesus has the right to speak so.

Vers. 5, 6. *easier*. It is as easy to *say* the one as the other, but to say either so as to produce the result is equally difficult in this respect that both require the power of God. To heal the body and to forgive the sin of the soul are held distinct by Jesus. But it can be seen from the result that Jesus has the power to heal, and therefore when He says "Thy sins are forgiven thee," it can be inferred that He has the power of God there also. *power* here="authority," delegated by God. *on earth*—emphatic from its position, now and here, contrasting with the thought of the scribes, Only God and only in heaven. *the Son of man*. Cf. Appendix, Note C. The authority is claimed not for man in general but for Himself. The scribes in holding that only God can forgive sins are true to the O.T., but Jesus claims that as the Son of Man He is commissioned by God to exercise this Divine prerogative. *then saith he*—completing the argument with a deed. *Arise . . . house*. Not merely healed but restored to full strength. The bed was a light sort of a litter.

Ver. 8. *the multitudes*—in and about the house, as Mark ii. 2 mentions. *marvelled*—"were afraid," due to this claim, supported by a miracle, of power to forgive, implying a Judge who could also condemn. Mark's "astonished" seems to imply that it was the miraculous power which most impressed them.

*men*. For Jesus was at least a man. But they may have taken "the Son of man" as="man," according to the common Aramaic usage. To the Evangelist it undoubtedly meant "Messiah."

## IX. 9. THE CALL OF MATTHEW.

9 And as Jesus passed forth from thence, he saw a man, named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he saith unto him, Follow me. And he arose, and followed him.

Vers. 9-17, though interrupting the series of miracles, are inserted here because Mark ii. 13-22 connects them with the preceding.

Ver. 9. *passed . . . thence*—from the house where the paralytic

was healed along to the custom-house of Capernaum, which was probably just outside the town. Capernaum was on the caravan route between Syria and Egypt, and lay on the frontier of the dominion of Herod Antipas, for whom the customs were levied. It would be an important custom-house, and the town would be full of custom-house officials, called publicans (cf. n. on v. 46). *Matthew*. Identified by tradition with the Levi of Mark and Luke. *Matthew* (perhaps = "Jehovah's gift," though that is doubtful) would be the name given to Levi after his call, as Simon was called Peter (Rock). The Evangelist, whose Gospel is distinguished by its embodiment of the Logia of Matthew, would naturally give Levi his apostolic name. *Follow me*. Jesus' choice of a publican for an apostle is of course based on personal fitness, but is meant also as a decisive assertion of His principles against Pharisaism, as vers. 10-13 show. It was contrary to worldly prudence, but that does not weigh with Christ. *he arose*. Some previous acquaintance with Jesus is necessarily presupposed. The immediate obedience proves that Matthew is ready. Jesus seizes the psychological moment.

#### IX. 10-13. THE FEAST WITH PUBLICANS.

- 10 And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house, be-  
hold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him  
11 and his disciples. And when the Pharisees saw it, they said  
unto his disciples, Why eateth your Master with publicans  
12 and sinners? But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them,  
They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.

Ver. 10. *sat*—reclined, with His arm on a cushion. *in the house*. In Mark ii. 15 Levi's house is most probably meant, and so Luke takes it. But Matthew seems to have understood it of Jesus' house = Peter's, which was Jesus' home in Capernaum. *many*. Cf. n. on ver. 9. *publicans and sinners*—classed morally together. A publican might be upright (cf. n. on v. 46), but an honest publican was about as rare as a white crow. Sinners were men of immoral life, with whom the publicans, being ostracised from respectable society, associated. *came*—either as spectators, though uninvited and not partaking of the feast, according to the free Eastern custom of the open door, or, as the feast was probably actually in Matthew's house, invited by Matthew.

Ver. 11. It is not likely that the Pharisees were present. They would hear of the fact. *your Master*—"Rabbi," with perhaps a tone of contempt in *your*. They wish to discredit Jesus in the mind of His disciples.

Ver. 12. A proverbial saying. *whole*—"strong," i.e. in sound health. Preference for low company is a sign of low character, but Jesus only follows His calling, to be the Physician of sick souls.

- 13 But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

Ver. 13. *Go*. A common Rabbinical expression, the word of a teacher to a scholar, enjoining consideration of a subject. It will also mean here dismissal of the critics. *I will . . . sacrifice* (Hos. vi. 6). The prophetic word does not condemn ceremonial worship (sacrifice), but insists on the supremacy of the ethical (mercy). If the two conflict, the ceremonial must go, for no approach to God is possible till one's relations to man are right (cf. v. 24). *I am come*. His actions are determined by His mission. *to call*. Of an invitation to a feast, here generally of His mission to call men to the kingdom. He does not merely let sinners come. He has to bid them come. *righteous . . . sinners*. Jesus simply speaks here on the basis of the current moral classification. He does actually call the righteous class also, e.g. Peter and John. But the statement is absolute that He calls only sinners, i.e. souls in moral need. He calls men not as righteous but as souls in need, and in v. 20 declares the righteousness of the righteous class to be insufficient. *to repentance* is to be deleted, according to the best MSS. It is to the kingdom Jesus calls men, to a feast of joyous life, though repentance is a necessary step to it.

#### IX. 14, 15. THE FASTING QUESTION.

- 14 Then came to him the disciples of John, saying, Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not?  
15 And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bride-chamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? but the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast.

Ver. 14. In Mark ii. 18 the questioners are indefinite. Matthew makes them disciples of John; Luke, the Pharisaic critics of the feast. *oft*. The Pharisees fasted every Monday and Thursday, and on many other occasions (cf. n. on vi. 16). In some MSS, however, *oft* does not occur, and the question turns not on the frequency of fasting but on its entire absence in the Jesus circle. Special emphasis lies on the difference from the John circle.

Ver. 15. *the children of the bride-chamber*. Hebraic for the friends of the bridegroom; not the guests generally, but those intimate friends who had special functions to perform during the marriage festivities, which lasted over several days. *mourn*—the inward cause of fasting. The word heightens the incongruity. The time Jesus is with His disciples is like a marriage festivity, a glimpse into the joy of the Jesus circle. *taken from them*. Not of the natural separation of the bridegroom from his friends on the consummation of the marriage, but of an event which suddenly

ends and dashes the festivity before the consummation. It can only allude to the Death of Christ.

*shall . . . fast.* Not enjoining fasting after His departure, but stating a fact. When they have cause to feel sorrow, they will fast. Jesus stands simply for the free and natural expression of the mood of the spirit.

### IX. 16, 17. THE NEW AND THE OLD.

- 16 No man putteth a piece of new cloth unto an old garment ;  
for that which is put in to fill it up taketh from the garment,  
17 and the rent is made worse. Neither do men put new wine  
into old bottles ; else the bottles break, and the wine runneth  
out, and the bottles perish : but they put new wine into new  
bottles, and both are preserved.

Christianity here appears as a new religion, not as a reformation of Judaism. If it be inserted into a system which requires fasting and other forms as essential, if it be used merely to patch up the holes in Judaism, it will only be destructive of Judaism (ver. 16) ; it will not only destroy Judaism, but will itself perish (ver. 17).

Ver. 16. *putteth . . . unto*—"putteth a patch of undressed (*i.e.* cloth in its raw state, before it has passed through the fuller's hands) cloth upon." *taketh from*—"drags away from," because it is stronger and because it shrinks. As it drags away, it takes part of the old garment with it. *made worse.* Judaism as it is would be better than a patchwork of Judaism and Christianity. But the inference is, "throw away the form of Judaism, and let a new form be fashioned out of Christianity."

Ver. 17. *new—i.e.* "must," wine recently pressed from the grape. *wine.* Symbolising the fermenting power of the new religion. *bottles.* As the new wine ferments, the old skin bottles, too hard to stretch and too weak to resist, burst. *both are preserved.* This part of the parabolic saying must not be pressed into a desire of Jesus that Judaism should be preserved.

### IX. 18-26. THE DAUGHTER OF JAIRUS AND THE WOMAN WITH THE ISSUE OF BLOOD.

- 18 While he spake these things unto them, behold, there came a  
certain ruler, and worshipped him, saying, My daughter is even  
now dead : but come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall

Ver. 18. *ruler—i.e.* of the synagogue, called Jairus in Mark. *now dead.* In Mark v. 35 word comes on the way that she has died, but Matthew summarises the whole of this section. Jairus' faith thus appears even greater than it is in Mark.



19 live. And Jesus arose, and followed him, and so did his  
 20 disciples. And, behold, a woman, which was diseased with an  
 issue of blood twelve years, came behind him, and touched the  
 21 hem of his garment: for she said within herself, If I may but  
 22 touch his garment, I shall be whole. But Jesus turned him  
 about; and when he saw her, he said, Daughter, be of good  
 comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman  
 23 was made whole from that hour. And when Jesus came into  
 the ruler's house, and saw the minstrels and the people  
 24 making a noise, he said unto them, Give place: for the maid  
 is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed him to scorn.

Ver. 19. *arose*. From the house where He was talking with the disciples of John, to which Matthew attaches the incident. In Mark v. 21 Jesus is surrounded by a multitude on the Lake side, when Jairus comes.

Ver. 20. *issue of blood*. Cf. Lev. xv. 32. *came*. On the way to Jairus' house. *behind*. To snatch a cure unobserved, partly from modesty, partly because an unclean person was forbidden to touch another. Matthew, summarising the incident, has omitted to mention the crowd, which gave her the opportunity to steal up unobserved. *hem*. One of the tassels at the four corners of the outer cloak, which were to remind them of the commandments (Deut. xxii. 12; Num. xv. 38, 39). The cloak was a large piece of cloth like a plaid, the loose end being thrown over the shoulder. It was the tassel attached to this end over the shoulder which the woman would touch. Faith and superstition are mingled together in the woman.

Ver. 22. *turned*—feeling a significant nervous touch. *said*—reading her thoughts, as in ix. 4. *Daughter*. Endearing word to a woman, as son to a man in ix. 2. *be . . . comfort*. Same word as in ix. 2. Jesus first encourages the disheartened soul. *thy faith . . . whole*. Overlooking the superstition, but telling her that her cure is due to her faith (=her trust in His power), not to His garment.

*from that hour*. Matthew dates the cure from the moment Jesus spoke, Mark from the moment she touched Him.

Ver. 23. *minstrels*. Male flute-players, professional mourners hired by the well-to-do. "Even the poorest in Israel will provide two flutes and a wailer." The wailer is a woman. Women also were hired whose profession it was to aid the mourners in lamenting the dead. These would form part of the crowd making a noise, *i.e.* of lamentation. The others would consist of relatives and friends and neighbours gathered to comfort them and join in the lamentations. Mourning lasted for seven days, sometimes longer. In later times at least funeral feasts were customary.

Ver. 24. *Give place*. Depart! This hired systematised mourning and unrestrained grief would be distasteful to Jesus' sincerity and faith in God. It was the silent tear-drop which fell at Lazarus' grave.

25 But when the people were put forth, he went in, and took  
 26 her by the hand, and the maid arose. And the fame hereof  
 went abroad into all that land.

He demands peace in the chamber of death. *for . . . sleepeth.* The grief is needless. The whole narrative is against the idea that she was only in a swoon. Sleep was occasionally used in the O.T. of death (cf. 1 Kings ii. 10; Ps. xiii. 3; Jer. li. 39), also in early and frequently in later Greek. It became, as in St. Paul's Epistles, the common Christian expression for death, due to Jesus' way of speaking and to the hope of resurrection. Here Jesus uses "dead" in the ordinary sense of final departure, from which there is no recall. *She sleepeth*—is only temporarily gone, and can be recalled. *laughed . . . scorn.* They knew she was dead, and took the word "sleepeth" in its literal sense.

Ver. 25. *put forth*—out of the house, usually of more or less violent ejection. Here, as occasionally, of firm but not violent compulsion. He would not move till the house was clear of the rabble. *went in*—to the inner death chamber.

Ver. 26. An insertion of the Evangelist. "*And all that land*" (*i.e.* of Israel, probably) looks as though he were living out of Palestine when he wrote.

#### IX. 27-31. THE HEALING OF TWO BLIND MEN.

27 And when Jesus departed thence, two blind men followed  
 him, crying, and saying, Thou son of David, have mercy on us.  
 28 And when he was come into the house, the blind men came  
 to him: and Jesus saith unto them, Believe ye that I am  
 29 able to do this? They said unto him, Yea, Lord. Then  
 touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith be  
 30 it unto you. And their eyes were opened: and Jesus straitly

Ver. 27. *thence.* From Jairus' house. *two.* Cf. n. on viii. 28. *blind.* One of the commonest ailments of the East. The men would probably have been sitting by the wayside. Matthew is here stringing together a group of typical miracles. The occasion might have been later, and the striking similarity to xx. 29-34 suggests a duplicate. But there must have been many healings of blind men. *crying.* The piercing cry for help. *son of David.* Popular title for Messiah.

Ver. 28. *the house.* Jesus' house in Capernaum.

Ver. 29. *touched.* The power does not lie in the method, which varies; but the method may have been adapted to their faith. *According . . . you.* Cf. viii. 13. Faith=confidence in Jesus' power to heal.

Ver. 30. *were opened.* Restoration of sight popularly called an opening of the eyes.

31 charged them, saying, See that no man know it. But they, when they were departed, spread abroad his fame in all that country.

*straitly charged.* The word is used originally of the snorting of a horse; then of an angry, threatening look; here of a stern command. *no . . . it.* Lest the miracle sensation should awaken false and premature Messianic expectations. No attention was paid to their cries on the road because they had addressed Him as Messiah.

Ver. 31. The disobedience, which meant no evil, of those who cannot keep a secret.

### IX. 32-34. THE DUMB DEMONIAC.

32 As they went out, behold, they brought to him a dumb man  
33 possessed with a devil. And when the devil was cast out,  
the dumb spake: and the multitudes marvelled, saying, It  
34 was never so seen in Israel. But the Pharisees said, He  
casteth out devils through the prince of the devils.

Ver. 32. *As . . . out.* As the two blind men went out of the house. *they.* Indefinite. People. *dumb . . . devil.* The dumbness is not organic, but due to possession inhibiting speech.

Ver. 33. *spake.* The inhibition being removed by the ejection of the demon. *the multitudes.* The interest of the Evangelist in this miracle lies in the impression on the multitude and in the Pharisaic criticism, as in xii. 22-24, with which vers. 32-34 seem practically identical. This particular miracle could hardly by itself account for the wonder of the crowd. It is rather used to wind up the series of miracles here grouped, because the expression of the common people's wonder, and the Pharisaic criticism attached to it, represent the effect of Jesus' miracles, especially of His power of demon expulsion. It prepares the way for x. 25.

Ver. 34. *the prince of the devils.* Ascribing Jesus' power to an unholy alliance with Beelzebub (x. 25), who rules the inferior demons according to Jewish notions—a deliberate slander, intended to discredit Jesus.

### IX. 35-38. INTRODUCTION TO THE MISSION OF THE TWELVE.

35 And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.

Ver. 35 summarises retrospectively Jesus' ministry of word (v.-vii.) and of healing (viii.-ix. 34), repeating the phraseology of iv. 23, which prospectively summarised the same.

36 But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered  
 37 abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers  
 38 are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.

Ver. 36. The impression made on Jesus of the spiritual condition of the common people, their spiritual need (ver. 36), their spiritual susceptibility (ver. 37).

*moved with compassion*—lit. "was gripped in His heart concerning them." *fainted*. "Were harassed" by the burdens imposed on them and the obstacles laid in their way (cf. xxiii. 4, 13, etc.). *scattered abroad*. "Prostrate," of their disheartened souls. Like shepherdless sheep driven on by hunger in search of food but finding none, they lie fallen and hopeless where their strength gave out. Their state is due to the absence of true shepherds. Their spiritual guides neither had the insight to know where the pastures of God lay (xv. 14), nor had they the true shepherd's heart (xxiii. 5).

Ver. 37. *harvest*. Their rich and gladdening spiritual susceptibility, due to their need; ripe, not as saints for heaven, but as hungry souls. *few*. Out of all proportion to the number of souls waiting to be reaped.

Ver. 38. *Lord of the harvest*. Because it is God who made them ripe, and the harvest of souls belongs to Him. *send forth*. The few, who see the harvest exceeding their power to reap, must pray to the Maker of the harvest, who must wish to see it reaped. *labourers*. The crying need is for more reapers. There is plenty to reap.

## X. 1-15. THE MISSION OF THE TWELVE.

- 1 AND when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness, and all manner of disease.
- 2 Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James
- 3 the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; Philip, and

Ver. 1. Their equipment. *called*. They are already present (ix. 37), but Matthew is here attaching himself to Mark vi. 7. *twelve*. Mark iii. 13 f., which describes the constitution of the inner circle, has been omitted by Matthew, but is here assumed. *power*. "Authority," not of an inalienable personal endowment, but of an authorisation limited to this particular mission.

Vers. 2-4. The list (Mark iii. 16-19) previously omitted by Matthew, is here parenthetically inserted. *apostles*="the sent-forth" with a commission, the only occasion where Matthew calls them by their

Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew the publican; James the son of Alphæus, and Lebbæus, whose surname was Thaddæus; Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him. These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.

later name. *first*. In position or prominence. Peter always appears at the head of the Twelve. Matthew arranges them in pairs, thus expressing the idea of Mark vi. 7: "He began to send them forth by two and two." This arrangement may be reminiscent of the pairs actually associated. *Bartholomew*. Aramaic="Son of Tolmai," commonly identified with Nathanael, a Greek name. *Thomas*. Aramaic="the Twin." *Lebbæus*. Some MSS have Lebbæus alone and some Thaddæus alone. Thaddæus="breast-child," is perhaps the original, for which Lebbæus, formed from Hebrew word "heart" = the man of heart, was substituted. Thaddæus may be a corruption of Judas, the name in Luke vi. 16.

*Simon the Canaanite*. "The Canaanæan," misunderstood as="Man of Cana," hence Canaanite. It is probably rightly interpreted by Luke, "the Zealot," a member of a fanatical party of the Pharisees, which since the insurrection of Judas (Acts v. 37) stood for uncompromising war with Rome. *Judas Iscariot*. Always last in the list. Iscariot is usually taken as="the Man of Kerioth" in Judah. Then he would be the only disciple not from Galilee.

Ver. 5. *sent forth*. To extend His influence in view of the need and susceptibility of the people (ix. 36-38).

*Go not*. More exactly, "go not away," i.e. from your right road. *into the way of*—i.e. the way leading to=simply "to," "towards." There was a large Gentile population in Galilee.

*Samaritans*. During the Exile the people of Samaria had intermarried with Assyrian settlers. Consequently, they were looked upon by the Jews as half heathen, and had been ostracised. The feeling of hate between them was intensified by religious differences.

Ver. 6. *lost*. Not eternally, but as in ix. 36. No special class, like the publicans and sinners, is meant, but the whole people (cf. "my people hath been lost sheep," Jer. l. 6). *house of Israel*. Looked on as a family (cf. Ex. xix. 3). "*Israel*" the most sacred name, the people as in covenant with God. Israel is lost religiously for want of true shepherds.

Ver. 7. *as ye go*—from place to place. *preach*. Not of a public address in the synagogue or in the open air, but of a talk in the house (cf. ver. 12). *The kingdom . . . hand*. The Baptist's word (iii. 2), taken up by Jesus (iv. 17), now passed on to His disciples. The continuity of the message is preserved, but it is now more a message of hope than it was with the Baptist.

8 Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out  
 9 devils : freely ye have received, freely give. Provide neither  
 10 gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, nor scrip for  
 your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet  
 11 staves ; for the workman is worthy of his meat. And into  
 whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, enquire who in  
 12 it is worthy ; and there abide till ye go thence. And  
 13 when ye come into an house, salute it. And if the house

Ver. 8. *Heal . . . devils* (cf. xi. 5). They are to do exactly as Jesus did, as described in chaps. viii., ix. *freely . . . received*. The gift of ver. 1. *freely give*. Directed not so much against withholding the use of their power, as against making it a means of gain (cf. 2 Cor. xi. 7).

Ver. 9. *Provide*. "Acquire." In Mark and Luke the command is against providing beforehand for their needs, in Matthew against taking gifts as payment for service. *brass*. "Bronze," the coin of least value—not even a copper. *purses*. "Girdles." The outer garment was folded over the girdle and the fold used as a purse.

Ver. 10. *scrip*. "Wallet," for carrying provisions, slung over the shoulder. *for your journey*—lit. "for the road," "for travelling." *two coats*. "Tunics," the undergarment. Two would be taken for a change. *shoes*. "Sandals." They are to go barefoot. *staves*. "A staff," used for support and, weighted with iron, as a club for defence. Mark allows the staff and enjoins the wearing of sandals, but the prohibition is in keeping with the other injunctions. The particular commands are of course not of universal validity, but designed for this special mission. The aim is to inculcate on the disciples simplicity, honesty, unworldliness, and trust in God free of all care, and to produce the impression of the right spirit, love which freely gives and seeks no gain, desiring only to do good, dissociated from all appearance of being a tour for trade or pleasure. *the workman . . . meat*. Those who receive the spiritual benefit will gladly recognise that material maintenance is their due. Correctly interpreted by St. Paul (1 Cor. ix. 14).

Ver. 11. *town*. "Village." *worthy*. Of good reputation ; character, not social position, is meant. *there*. In this man's house ; selecting it after careful inquiry, in order that no discredit should be thrown on their cause. *abide*. Though they should hear of a better, in order not to hurt the feelings of their host or to appear worldly, discontented men. "Abide" also means that the house was to be their place of work, as well as their lodgings. No house-to-house visitation. Hospitality was freely given to strangers in the East, and outsiders were accustomed to enter freely to see and hear the guest. Jesus availed Himself of this social custom for the purposes of the mission. *thence*. Out of the city or village.

Ver. 12. *an house*. The house selected. *salute it*. The Eastern salutation, "Peace be to this house." The Orientals laid great stress

be worthy, let your peace come upon it: but if it be not  
 14 worthy, let your peace return to you. And whosoever shall  
 not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart  
 out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet.  
 15 Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land  
 of Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for  
 that city.

on such ceremonial politeness. No breach of social etiquette, no discourtesy is allowed.

Ver. 13. *worthy*. Taking on the deeper signification of susceptibility to their message. If their response to your message proves them to be as good as their reputation. *your peace*. The gospel peace you possess. *come*. The actual peace of which the salutation spoke. *return*. Failure does not impoverish them, and should therefore not dishearten them. In Luke the result follows of itself; here the disciples have power to cause it (cf. John xiv. 27). Both are true.

Ver. 14. *receive you*. In a friendly, hospitable way. *hear*. Respond to the message. *shake off the dust*. A symbolic act signifying that they have nothing in common spiritually, are as heathen to them. The Pharisees passing from Gentile to Jewish soil shook off the dust as an unclean thing. This action would not be done in anger, but in serious sadness. In Mark and Luke it is for a testimony that this rejection of the gospel is a serious matter. They depart because there is so much harvest elsewhere, and no time to be lost (cf. Acts xiii. 51).

Ver. 15. *more tolerable*. Because the greater the opportunity, the heavier the judgment. *the land*—i.e. the people of the land. Sodom and Gomorrha were the proverbial examples of the depths of wickedness. *in the day of judgment*. Awaiting the dead and the living at the end of the world.

#### X. 16-39. PROPHECY OF FUTURE TROUBLE FOR THE APOSTLES.

16 Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves:

This section was clearly not spoken in connection with the Galilean mission, but is a prophecy of their experiences in days to come, the days that actually came after Christ's death. Matthew groups sayings, found in other connections in Mark and Luke, which relate to the general subject of missionary experiences and consolations. There is some doubt about ver. 16, as Luke gives it in the charge to the Seventy; but the picture seems too dark to suit the Galilean mission, though it would form a natural transition to the following troubles.

Ver. 16. *I*. Emphatic. Christ and the opposition to Him would be responsible for their troubles. *sheep . . . wolves*—i.e. in a situation of constant personal danger. "Sheep" describes their

- be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.  
 17 But beware of men; for they will deliver you up to the  
 councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues:  
 18 and ye shall be brought before governors and kings for  
 my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles.  
 19 But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what  
 ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour  
 20 what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the  
 21 Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you. And the  
 brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father

defenceless, non-resisting attitude. "Wolves" in vii. 15 = false teachers and leaders. These, like the scribes and Pharisees and rulers, were always the most wolfish centre of opposition, though "wolves" cover all who oppose. *wise . . . doves*. A current proverbial saying. The serpent was the type of subtle cunning (Gen. iii. 1), the dove of innocent, confiding simplicity (Hos. vii. 11). Wise, an intellectual excellence = able to see the right way to act in the midst of dangers. Harmless, a moral virtue = lit. "unmixed," *i.e.* with evil, pure in motive (cf. Rom. xvi. 19).

Ver. 17. *men*. What John calls the world, animated by principles which are hostile to Christ. *councils*. The Jewish courts of justice, the highest of which was specifically called the Council, the Sanhedrin. *synagogues*. Which had judicial and disciplinary functions (cf. 2 Cor. xi. 24; Acts xxii. 19).

Ver. 18. *brought*. By accusation (cf. Acts xviii. 12). *governors*. The Roman provincial governors. *kings*. Gentile kings, including naturally the Roman Emperor. *for a testimony to* (not "against") them (the governors and kings, or perhaps better, the Jews) and the Gentiles (the peoples governed by the governors and kings). The persecution is *for my sake*, *i.e.* for their Christianity, their confession or service of Christ. As they make their defence, an opportunity is given them to bear witness for Christ. This is the Divine purpose of their tribulation.

Ver. 19. *take no thought*. Be not anxious (cf. vi. 25). *how or what*. As to the manner or matter. Their very knowledge that it is God's purpose that they should bear witness to Christ would tend to increase their anxiety as to the how or what. *shall speak*. "Ought to speak." *given*. By inspiration, suggestion from within; coming not beforehand, but at the moment required.

Ver. 20. They are but the mouthpiece of the real speaker. The thought of *Father* inspires confidence (cf. vi. 32). The presupposition of this momentary inspiration is that they are entirely selfless and innocent, and brought into the position without seeking it, and that their minds are free from distraction.

Ver. 21. *brother*. Not only strangers, but the most intimate blood-relations. *deliver up*, as in vers. 17-19, suggests accusation before a law court. *rise up . . . death*. Social strife might take the law



the child : and the children shall rise up against their parents,  
 22 and cause them to be put to death. And ye shall be hated  
 of all men for my name's sake : but he that endureth to the  
 23 end shall be saved. But when they persecute you in this  
 city, flee ye into another : for verily I say unto you, Ye shall  
 not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be  
 24 come. The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant  
 25 above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as  
 his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called  
 the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall  
 26 they call them of his household? Fear them not therefore :  
 for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed ; and

into its own hands, but would usually lead to convicting information before a court of justice.

Ver. 22. *all men*. Popular expression for general hatred. *endureth*—i.e. continues in his confession or service. *the end* of the tribulation, when the Son of Man comes. *saved* from destruction at the day of judgment.

Ver. 23. Here the thought comes back to Palestine as the scene of work and persecution. *flee*. Not a sign of cowardice. They are to continue their work (ver. 22) to the end, and only be martyrs when they cannot help it. *another*. Of a different, non-persecuting spirit. *gone over*—lit. "finished," "exhausted." Some take this of completing their missionary work. Better, a city of refuge would always remain. *till . . . come*. The final coming of the Messiah to set up His kingdom. Like all eschatological conceptions, the manner of its fulfilment is very difficult to determine. The apostles looked for a personal return of Christ, but their conception was not realised.

Vers. 24, 25. A further consolation. Your experience will only be what Mine is. *master*. Teacher. *servant*—lord. "Slave"—master. *enough*. They cannot expect to be better off. They may be glad they are no worse. They may be content to be as He was. *Beelzebub*. Connected with "the Lord of flies," the god of Ekron, who had command over that part of the East (cf. 2 Kings i. 6), changed contemptuously into Beelzebub (the reading here), "the Lord of dung," or connected with the Phenician sun-god, "the Lord of the heavenly dwelling," i.e. of the air, for which, as the abode of evil spirits, cf. Eph. ii. 2. But the origin of the name is doubtful. It is the name of an odious demon, identified in xii. 24 with the prince of the devils, though there is no evidence that this was a prevailing view (cf. n. on ix. 34). *them . . . household*. The early Christians had the vilest names, e.g. atheist, thrown at them, and were charged with practising the black art in complicity with demons.

Vers. 26, 27. FIRST REASON AGAINST FEAR.—The slander is only the inevitable consequence of their calling. *them*. When they slander you. *therefore*. Because your experience will only be what Mine is.

- 27 hid, that shall not be known. What I tell you in darkness,  
 that speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, that  
 28 preach ye upon the house-tops. And fear not them which  
 kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather  
 fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.  
 29 Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them  
 30 shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the  
 31 very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not  
 therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows.  
 32 Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him  
 will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven.

*nothing . . . known.* A saying of Jesus found in different connections and capable of different applications. In Mark iv. 22 it is used of the hiding of truth in parables only to reveal it the more thereby; in Luke xii. 2 it is a warning against hypocrisy; here an encouragement not to avoid publicity by hiding their convictions. Hidden things are destined to come to the light. They should not fear, but calmly accept the inevitable consequence of being depositaries of the truth. *in darkness* = in privacy. *in light* = the light of publicity. *in the ear* = confidentially, as a whisper. They are like the interpreter, who proclaimed in the vernacular to the people what the Rabbi beside him had whispered in Hebrew into his ear. *preach.* Proclaim as with the loud voice of a herald. *house-tops.* Symbolic of absolute publicity (cf. 2 Sam. xvi. 22). The roofs of Eastern houses were flat.

Ver. 28. SECOND REASON AGAINST FEAR.—The limitation of man's power to hurt. Do not fear physical death. The soul is beyond their power to destroy.

*him*—i.e. God (cf. v. 29, 30; Jas. iv. 12). Let the fear of offending the greatest by unfaithfulness overcome the fear of offending the less by confession. *able . . . body.* As the destruction of the body is physical annihilation, the destruction of the soul should be personal, spiritual annihilation. Jesus, however, speaks only of God's full power over the soul up to total destruction, not of His will to destroy it.

Vers. 29-31. THIRD REASON AGAINST FEAR.—The providential care of your Father. *sparrows.* The commonest and least valuable of birds, eaten by the poorest. *farthing.* The Roman "as," a coin worth something less than a halfpenny. *fall.* Anyhow—hurt, caught, or killed. *without your Father.* Without the God of providence, who is to you a Father, being in the action, knowing, allowing, causing it or co-operating in it. *hairs.* In the O.T. also care for the very hairs of the head is the *ne plus ultra* of protection (cf. 1 Sam. xiv. 45). *numbered.* Only things considered valuable and to be guarded are counted. *of more value.* Jesus says less than He means. The infinite value of the human soul rests on this, that we are not merely His creatures but His children. To His Love the individual soul has an endless worth.

Vers. 32, 33. THE FINAL ENCOURAGEMENT AND WARNING.—

33 But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also  
 34 deny before my Father which is in heaven. Think not that  
 I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send  
 35 peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance  
 against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and  
 36 the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's  
 37 foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth  
 father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me; and he  
 that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of  
 38 me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after  
 39 me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose  
 it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.

*therefore.* Picking up the command of ver. 27. *confess me.* The whole question at stake. *I confess.* At the day of judgment. To be acknowledged as His by Christ will alone save them from being cast into hell (vii. 23). Note that the Father is the Judge, but that the word of Christ before Him is decisive for the judgment.

Vers. 34-36. FAMILY DIVISIONS OVER CHRIST.—*Think not.* A natural expectation. Peace was one of the promised gifts of the Messianic Age (cf. Mic. iv. 3). But it is not to come as a gift suddenly thrown in among men. It is reached through conflict. *sword.* Symbol of deadly struggle. The immediate effect of Christ's teaching, convulsive opposition, is spoken of as the aim of His coming. But the way of reaching the ultimate aim, peace, by uncompromising obedience to the truth, is as much designed as the ultimate aim. Vers. 35, 36 are an application of Mic. vii. 6. *set at variance.* "Divide," as opposing parties. *daughter-in-law.* "A young wife." It is suggestive that in each case it is the young who are set against the old. The young are natural revolutionaries, open to new ideas, less worldly by nature, more under the power of spiritual ideals. The Christ party, the rising youth. *they . . . household.* The members of one's family, the bitterest enmity.

Vers. 37-39. CONDITIONS OF DISCIPLESHIP.—*loveth . . . me.* In Luke xiv. 26, "hate not," expressing the vehement rejection of the rival claimant to supreme affection. Matthew shows it is only when family affection conflicts with the call of Christ that it must yield. *not . . . me*—i.e. to belong to Me, to be My disciple. Christ claims to represent the highest good and conscience of man. Vers. 38, 39 deeply impressed the disciples, as is seen from their recurrence in the Gospels (cf. xvi. 24, 25). *taketh not his cross.* Suggested by the custom of making criminals carry their own cross to the place of execution. The reference here is to death by persecution. The disciple must be ready to take upon him the most painful and shameful suffering even unto death. *followeth after me.* No mere imitative repetition of Christ's life, but faithfulness to His call amid all the contingencies of life, at whatsoever cost. *life.* The word is used in the subject clause of each sentence of the lower sense-life, and in

the predicate of the higher spiritual life. The contrast is between self-seeking and self-sacrifice for Christ's sake. In the present connection of death by persecution, the eternal life which is lost or found beyond death, according as one has avoided or endured the martyrdom on earth, is in view.

X. 40-42. THE TREATMENT OF THE CHRISTIAN MISSIONARY, PROBABLY THE CONCLUSION OF THE GALILEAN MISSION ADDRESS.

40 He that receiveth you, receiveth me ; and he that receiveth me,  
41 receiveth him that sent me. He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward ; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous  
42 man shall receive a righteous man's reward. And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.

Ver. 40. *receiveth you*. Not merely personal friendliness, but reception of their message. To receive the messenger of Christ is to receive Christ, because they represent Him and convey His teaching. To receive Christ is to receive God, because He is the messenger of God, representing God and bearing His word to men.

Ver. 41. *prophet*—*i.e.* a Christian prophet, a preacher of the gospel. The *righteous* man is one who practises or strives after the ideal of righteousness revealed by Christ ; not a man without faults, but a moral hero. *in the name of a prophet*. A Hebrew way of speaking, meaning "with the mind directed towards that which is signified by the name prophet," *i.e.* on the ground acknowledged of his being a prophet. *a prophet's reward*. The reward which a prophet receives in the kingdom. To recognise, appreciate, and honour the message of God in the prophet, the heroic goodness of a moral hero, implies a kindred spirit. It indicates a latent capacity which can be developed, and proves that we stand on the same plane of life, *i.e.* in this case the plane of eternal life, which is the reward in view. Only the godly can recognise the voice of God, only the good can appreciate goodness. This saying also reveals how God treats men on the principle of grace, which balances the unequal distribution both of gifts and of moral power (cf. xx. 1-16).

Ver. 42. This saying of Christ is probably out of its original setting, and Matthew has made it more out of keeping with the context by changing Mark's "you" (Mark ix. 41) into "these little ones." *these*. Implying, like "I say unto you," an audience whose attention He draws to little ones present. Little ones mean simple, weak disciples who are like little children. *a cup . . . only*. So refreshing to a thirsty traveller in the East. The least act of kindness, but its value lies in the motive, given because he is a disciple of Christ. *his reward*. Not, as in ver. 41, a disciple's reward, but simply the reward deserved.

# XI. 1-30. THE MESSIAH'S REFLECTION ON HIS MINISTRY.

- 1 AND it came to pass, when Jesus had made an end of commanding his twelve disciples, he departed thence, to teach and to preach in their cities.

Matthew does not describe the mission of the Twelve, nor even say that they went. He was interested only in Jesus' address to them. With a general formula of transition (ver. 1) he passes on. *thence*. From the place unnamed where the address to the Twelve was given. *their cities*—i.e. of the Galileans.

## XI. 2-6. THE BAPTIST IN DOUBT.

- 2 Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ,  
3 he sent two of his disciples, and said unto him, Art thou he  
4 that should come, or do we look for another? Jesus  
answered and said unto them, Go and show John again  
5 those things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive  
their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and

Ver. 2. *prison*. The fortress of Machærus, on the east of the Dead Sea, where Herod Antipas had imprisoned him, already recorded (iv. 12). Visits to the prisoner were allowed (cf. xxv. 36). *the works of Christ*. "Of the Messiah," spoken from the Evangelist's point of view: Him who was the Messiah. *sent two of his disciples*. "sent through his (= John's) disciples." John had still disciples who had not passed over to Jesus.

Ver. 3. *he . . . come*. "The Coming One" = the Messiah (cf. Ps. cxviii. 26; Heb. x. 37). *do we*. "Are we to." *another*. A different kind of person. A few see here incipient faith in Jesus' Messiahship, but it is surely a question of doubt. Vers. 7, 8 forbid our attributing the doubt to depression caused by imprisonment. It is due rather to impatience and to inadequate conceptions of the Messiah. The characteristic works of the Messiah, as John conceived Him, the forcible and sudden establishment of the Messianic kingdom preceded by a judgment (iii. 10, 12), appeared absent from Jesus. John has not changed his view. That is the trouble.

Ver. 4. *Go*. A note of command almost peremptory (cf. ii. 8, ix. 13). *show again*. Delete "again." Simply "report." *hear* from others, *see* with your own eyes.

Ver. 5. The *poor* are not to be distinguished as a different class of people from *the blind . . . dead*, and the gospel is not therefore the only gift given to the poor. All in need are in view, whether their need be physical or spiritual. In "the blind . . . raised up"

the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the 6 gospel preached to them. And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me.

physical need, in "the poor . . . them" spiritual need is in view, as in Isa. lxi. 1, Matt. ix. 36. Jesus bases His claim to be the Messiah on the fact that He satisfies the needs of men, physical and spiritual.

He does not answer John directly because He is not the Messiah of John's imagination. He describes His ministry in terms reminiscent of Isa. xxxv. 5, lxi. 1, with the exception of lepers and dead men. These prophecies held no place in the current Messianic ideal, from which John's conception did not differ, though he ethicised their political ideal (cf. iii. 7). But Jesus asks John to revise his conception in the light of the highest prophecies. To Jesus the Messiah is He who fulfils the highest ideal of the O.T. Jesus does not, however, imply that the works described exhaust His Messianic work. Rather all that He has done as yet is the fulfilment of vital elements in the highest conception of prophecy, and sufficient in themselves to mark Him out unmistakably as the Messiah.

Ver. 6. *offended*. "Made to stumble," i.e. into unbelief, always used of one who has been attracted by Jesus up to a certain point. *in me*—i.e. by anything in My ministry due to something inherent in Me. *blessed*. Because doubt or unbelief is not a happy state of mind, and to lose faith in Christ is to lose all. But the stumbling-block is the key to a new revelation leading to a new blessedness, and it is gently suggested to John that by insight and patience he will find the faith. Cf. Luke xxiv. 17 for the sadness of a lost ideal.

## XI. 7-15. JESUS' APPRECIATION OF JOHN.

7 And as they departed, Jesus began to say unto the multitudes concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness to

Ver. 7. *as . . . began*. John's question and Jesus' warning (ver. 6) might lead to a false depreciation of John in the popular eye. Sensitive to a great and good man's name, Jesus loses no time in defending the absent. *to see*. The sensational, theatrical gaze of spectators. What made John the rage of the day, taking you out even into the wilderness to see him? *A reed . . . wind*. It was no such common sight, seen any day by the banks of the sluggish Jordan, where John's headquarters were, but something exceptional about the man. Another idea is also implied—not a fickle changeling, but a man of strong conviction and character, not swayed by changing currents of opinion. This was the opinion of the people themselves, to which Jesus appeals to prove that his doubt is not due to inconstancy.

8 see? A reed shaken with the wind? But what went ye out  
 for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, they  
 9 that wear soft clothing are in kings' houses. But what went  
 ye out for to see? A prophet? yea, I say unto you, and  
 10 more than a prophet. For this is he, of whom it is written,  
 Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall  
 11 prepare thy way before thee. Verily I say unto you, Among  
 them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater

Ver. 8. *But.* Not that, what then? *kings' houses* = luxurious palaces (cf. iii. 4). John was not a weak, worldly sensualist, loving ease and pleasure. His doubt is not due to his craving for the material blessings of a Messianic good time.

Ver. 9. *prophet.* A spiritual messenger of God—the people's own idea. *more.* Because he fulfilled a prophecy and prepared the way for the immediate entry of the Messiah by making the people repentant, expectant, and hungry for Him.

Ver. 10. Mal. iii. 1, freely reproduced in a form probably current among the Christians. In Malachi it is God Himself who is coming; here it is the Messiah (*thy face*), whose way God prepares by sending His messenger.

Ver. 11. Jesus' own estimate of John. *born of women.* A solemn way of saying "men," expressing, like *verily*, an exalted mood in the speaker. *risen.* Raised up by God (cf. Luke vii. 16; Judg. ii. 18). *a greater.* If equalled by the greatest in Israel's great past—pagans do not come into view—not excelled. The greatness must refer to value of character and service, the only universal standard, not to historical position and calling, as in ver. 10, which vary. Cf. xviii. 1-4 for Jesus' idea of greatness. *least in the kingdom.* Life in the kingdom is graded according to spiritual worth and value of service (cf. v. 19). The least are the lowest degree of that class of little ones, insignificant ones, of whom Jesus speaks so often (x. 42, xviii. 6, etc.), and whose privileges He rated so high (xviii. 10). *is greater.* Some think that the kingdom is only viewed as to come, and that John, as he is now, is being compared with the least who will be in the kingdom. But surely "will be," not "is," would then have been necessary. v. 3 is not parallel.

The contrast is between the spirit of the kingdom, *i.e.* of Christ, and the spirit of John, a difference not merely in degree but in kind. John was rigorously ruled by the spirit of righteousness; Jesus by the spirit of love, which alone redeems. One who is still inquiring whether Jesus be the Christ, and does not yet see that He who satisfies man's need is the Christ, is necessarily outside the kingdom. A belief in the supremacy of love makes one not far from the kingdom (cf. Mark xii. 33, 34). But it is faith in Jesus as the Christ, the giver of the spirit of love, which enables one to enter the kingdom. He that is least inside stands in an order of life higher than the

than John the Baptist; notwithstanding he that is least  
 12 in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. And from  
 the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of  
 heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.  
 13 For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John.  
 14 And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come.  
 15 He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

greatest outside, and possesses higher privileges of access and nearness to God (cf. xviii. 10).

Ver. 12. A saying similar to vers. 12, 13 is found in another connection in Luke xvi. 16, and some think it is not in its original setting here. *the kingdom . . . force*. Some take this to refer to the persecution to which the kingdom was subjected in the person of the Baptist and the early Christians, but how could the Evangelist put such an obvious anachronism into the mouth of Jesus? Others suppose that Jesus is condemning the spirit of force by which John sought to bring the kingdom in. But that is out of keeping with Jesus' tender treatment of John. The key is surely to be found in Luke xvi. 16. The violence is the impetuous eagerness with which men fired in spirit by the spiritual movement first set on foot by John welcome and seize the gospel, at any cost to themselves.

Ver. 13. Explaining whence the impetuosity came—all the Prophets; and, when there were no prophets, the Law. The entire O.T. dispensation merely directed men's minds towards a kingdom far off in the future until John, who brought men up in a storm of enthusiasm to the gates of the kingdom. It is a new age which begins with John, the age of fulfilment contrasted with the age of hope and disciplinary preparation preceding the coming of Christ.

Ver. 14. *And—i.e. "and so."* *will receive*. "Are willing to receive." This identification of John with Elijah redivivus (Mal. iv. 5), not being a literal fulfilment of the prophecy, they might find it difficult to accept.

Ver. 15. The favourite expression of Jesus when a saying, penetrating beyond the superficial notions prevalent, called for special attention and spiritual susceptibility to understand it.

## XI. 16-19. THE WHIMSICAL HUMOUR OF HIS CONTEMPORARIES.

16 But whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto  
 children sitting in the markets, and calling unto their fellows,  
 17 and saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not

Vers. 16, 17. *this generation*. Only the critical section, the Pharisees, are meant. *markets*. "Market-places," where children play. *pipéd*. Imitating the merry tones of a flute at a marriage



danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not  
18 lamented. For John came neither eating nor drinking, and  
19 they say, He hath a devil. The Son of man came eating  
and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a  
wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. But Wisdom  
is justified of her children.

dance (cf. Luke xv. 25). *mourned*. Imitating the wailing notes of a funeral dirge (cf. ix. 23). *lamented*—i.e. beaten your breasts. One set of children are trying to get another set to join in a game. They try "marriages," and then "funerals"; but in neither case will the others respond. The fault is not in the game, but in the humour of the children. The critics are as childish whimsical in rejecting both John with his gloomy asceticism and Jesus with His joyous freedom. They do not know what they want.

Vers. 18, 19. *came*. As one sent by God. *neither . . . drinking*. Hyperbolic for severe asceticism—not eating nor drinking in the ordinary way. *devil*. Insanity does take the form of melancholy. *The Son of man*. Cf. Appendix, Note C. Jesus makes His sociability arise out of His Messianic vocation, which of course goes back to His nature.

*friend . . . sinners*. Cf. n. on v. 46, ix. 10, 12. First a sneering insinuation, now a name of honour.

*Wisdom* is best taken of the Divine Wisdom who inspired and sent both John and Jesus (cf. Prov. viii.). *justified . . . children*. Declared right by those who are spiritually akin to her, and respond by welcoming both. Another reading is, *her works* = the effects produced on the lives of disciples of John and Jesus.

## XI. 20-24. LAMENT OVER THE GALILEAN CITIES.

20 Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his  
21 mighty works were done, because they repented not: Woe  
unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the  
mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre  
and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth

Vers. 20, 21. *most . . . works*—"his very many miracles." *Woe*. Not the utterance of angry passion nor of a curse, but the solemn lament of a prophet foreseeing inevitable doom. *Chorazin*. About an hour's journey north of Capernaum. No miracle there is recorded, a proof of the number unrecorded. *Bethsaida*. On the left of the Jordan, to the north of the Lake. *Tyre and Sidon*. Flourishing commercial cities, the centres of the Phœnician Empire, over which, for their wickedness, prophets had uttered words of doom (Isa. 23; Ezek. xxvi., xxvii.). *sackcloth*. A garment of rough cloth tied with a string, worn next the skin, and hanging loose and unsightly like a sack (cf. Isa.

- 22 and ashes. But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you.  
 23 And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would  
 24 have remained until this day. But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee.

iii. 24). *ashes*. They put ashes on their head (2 Sam. xiii. 19) or sat among them (Job ii. 8). Typical Oriental expressions of great sorrow.

Ver. 22. *But*—"moreover": so ver. 24. *more tolerable*. Because they were less privileged. *judgment*. Cf. n. on. x. 15.

Vers. 23, 24. *which . . . hell*. Better, "Shalt thou be exalted unto heaven? Unto Hades shalt thou come down"—modelled on Isa. xiv. 13-15, the pride and fall of Babylon. Heaven and Hades (not Gehenna) are here purely metaphorical for the highest exaltation and the lowest humiliation. Capernaum was proud of its commercial importance, but blind to the significance of Jesus. *Sodom*. So immersed in the affairs of this world, fit comparison with a proud commercial city. *more tolerable*. Capernaum was specially favoured as being the residence of Jesus and the centre of His activity.

#### XI. 25-27. JESUS' ADORATION.

- 25 At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed

Ver. 25. Occasioned by some successful mission like the return of the Seventy, to which Luke attaches it. *answered*. A Hebraic mode of expression, the question being latent in the situation. *thank*—"praise," joyous adoration of the grace of God, who makes the message of the kingdom accessible to all, by requiring only childlike simplicity. It is a rapturous soliloquy overheard by the disciples, in which Jesus utters His deepest thoughts. *hid*. Due to the moral order, but that has been ordained by God. The religious eye sees God operative in the secondary cause. *these things*. In Luke the message proclaimed by the Seventy, here the message of John and Jesus and His mighty works, spoken of in the preceding verses. In any case, it covers the message of the kingdom in word and deed.

*wise and prudent*—"wise and understanding" = the learned, cultured classes, the scribes and Pharisees. *revealed*. Revelation on God's side, insight on man's (cf. John xvi. 13-15). *babes*. Child-like, open-minded simplicity of the unlearned and unintellectual, free from the prejudices of the educated and the conceit of the intellectual. Moral simplicity, a tender heart, a sensitive conscience are essential

26 them unto babes. Even so, Father; for so it seemed good  
 27 in thy sight. All things are delivered unto me of my  
 Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father;  
 neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he  
 to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.

for the knowledge of God. The intellect alone can never reach God. But it is possible to be wise and yet be a babe. Jesus does not praise God because the truth is hidden from any man, but because it is revealed on conditions which make it open to all. Notice also that the Wisdom of God (ver. 19) makes the wisdom of man foolishness and the foolish things (babes) are divinely wise, exactly as 1 Cor. i. 25-27.

Ver. 26. *Even so*—"yea." Glad-hearted agreement with this order of things. *for*. The meaning is "what was (eternally) thy good pleasure, thy gracious will, is come to pass." He rejoices in the facts of history fulfilling the eternal purpose of grace.

Ver. 27. *All things*. To be interpreted by the thought of vers. 25, 26; not, therefore, all things that exist, but all things relating to God's purpose of grace, to fulfil which Jesus was commissioned (cf. xxviii. 18). The following words indicate that it is the full and adequate knowledge of God which was delivered to Christ. *are delivered*—"were delivered." The words do not directly state the personal pre-existence of Christ, but date His equipment for His mission to a past act of God, as v. 17, ix. 13, 34, x. 40. The idea in delivered is entrusted for a mission. The word is used in Christian literature of handing on the truth revealed and entrusted to Christians by Christ (cf. 2 Tim. i. 12, 14).

*and*. Giving a further explanation of "all . . . Father." *knoweth*—"knoweth thoroughly." Some knowledge all men have, but not adequate knowledge. It will be by experience that He has discovered that no man thoroughly understands Him or God. Hence the saying follows, vers. 25, 26. The knowledge of Himself and of the Father are viewed as complementary, the one being impossible without the other. It is this consciousness of a unique knowledge of God which constitutes His equipment for His mission, here viewed as that of a Revealer of God. The peculiar use of *the Son, the Father, my Father*, makes the ground of this unique mutual knowledge a correspondingly unique personal relationship between Himself and God. *will reveal*. Not the future tense, but "willeth to reveal." The full knowledge of God depends on Christ's will to reveal what He alone possesses. The rejection of His message by the wise and prudent is due to their misunderstanding of God, and in answer to that He asserts that He is indispensable to them, as to all, for the knowledge of God. Notice also that the point of view in ver. 27 is that distinctive of the Fourth Gospel. The peculiar gift of Christ is the knowledge of God and of Himself=eternal life (cf. John xvii. 3).

## XI. 28-30. JESUS' GRACIOUS INVITATION.

28 Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I  
29 will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest

He does will (ver. 27) to give the knowledge of God which He alone possesses. The passage is reminiscent of many O.T. passages (cf. Isa. xiv. 3, xxviii. 12, lv. 1-3; Jer. vi. 16, xxxi. 2, 25). It agrees so closely with Eccus. li. 23-27 that it appears dependent on it, which only implies that Jesus finds the language of the Son of Sirach, as He elsewhere finds that of the prophets, fitted to express His own consciousness. The Son of Sirach calls on men to come to him to receive the instruction of the Divine Wisdom which has so blest his own soul.

Ver. 28. *Come*. As in iv. 19, combining the notes of love and of command. *me*. As to a teacher, revealer, as further explained in ver. 29. In Eccus. li. 23, "draw near unto me"=to receive instruction; but a personal relation is also involved here. Cf. xix. 14, where the phrase does not mean coming to a teacher, but to a conductor of spiritual blessing. That comes through teaching, but it also comes in other ways, e.g. through love. *labour*. Of over-exertion, the struggle which does not avail (cf. vi. 25 ff.). *heavy laden*. Of the heavy burden on the back in addition to the personal exertion. Historically the words describe the Pharisaic religion, which imposed such heavy burdens (Luke xi. 46) and demanded such laborious effort as a scheme of salvation by self, but never got home to the goal. But the words cover all the labour and burden of the soul in quest of God; not physical, except as the moral and spiritual struggle enter into the physical (cf. vi. 25). To those outside the struggle for God, to the self-complacent, He has no message. *rest*. By imparting the knowledge of God, as in vi. 30 ff., where the knowledge of God's fatherly care leads to the restfulness of faith, by freeing from the excessive toil and burden of anxiety, and by imparting the spirit of sonship, with which the knowledge of God is bound up (ver. 27). The word for *rest* covers the ideas both of "rest" and "refreshing." There is an emancipation from toil and burden. There is also a refreshing of the exhausted soul. It is not from the strenuous but from the over-strenuous life and the misdirected strenuousness Jesus calls (cf. v. 6).

Ver. 29. *Take . . . me*. The Rabbis said, "Take upon you the yoke of the kingdom of the heavens"=submit to the rule, enter the service, of God. Christ's service is His school, but what He specially speaks of is submissiveness to His teaching, which is the revelation of God. It is explained by "learn of me"—including His example and His spirit in His teaching.

*for . . . heart*. "In heart" emphasises the genuineness of His humility, no surface or mock humility. It might be a reason why

30 unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

He cannot be a hard Master, but it rather is a reason for trusting that His revelation is true. Meekness, a spirit submissive to God's will and open to truth, and humility, a spirit produced by the constant perception of the sublimity of God, testify to a true consciousness of God (cf. Ps. cxxxviii. 6). The mind of the rebellious and the proud revolves round self, and *ipso facto* is not religious. To call Himself meek and humble is not self-exaltation, but is due to a correct analysis of His own character. The only person one may know with any degree of certainty is oneself, and the reader of men's hearts (ix. 4) must have been able to read His own.

Ver. 30. The ideas of yoke and burden run into one another and are an example of the Hebraic way of expressing the same or a similar thought in parallel words. The yoke is the truth, which is a spirit (not intellectual) learned from Christ, which guides and controls the soul. It is easy, *i.e.* mild or kindly, because the truth is agreeable to our nature. Its control is not the compulsion of an alien or arbitrary authority like Pharisaic legalism, but the inward constraint of a kindred spirit of reason and love, which so mingles with our spirit that it is felt to be our own spontaneous inclination. The burden is the varied commands laid on us by Christ. As He has made duty an infinite ideal, the burden may seem heavier than before. But the command is the command of love, of One who inspires the love which can fulfil it. His ideal has an attractive power, and lifts us up with everlasting arms.

## XII. 1-45. CONFLICTS WITH THE PHARISEES.

### XII. 1-8. THE SABBATH QUESTION.

- 1 AT that time Jesus went on the sabbath day through the corn; and his disciples were an hungered, and began to
- 2 pluck the ears of corn, and to eat. But when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto him, Behold, thy disciples do that
- 3 which is not lawful to do upon the sabbath day. But he said unto them, Have ye not read what David did, when

Vers. 1, 2. *the corn*—"the cornfields." *not lawful*. A hungry man was allowed, according to the humane law of Deut xxiii. 25, to pluck the ear of corn belonging to another. The illegality lay in doing so on the Sabbath, according to the scribal interpretation of the law. They argued that plucking the ears is a form of reaping = work.

Ver. 3. From the scribal tradition Jesus first appeals to similar examples in the O.T. David is not stated to have eaten the shew-

- 4 he was an hungered, and they that were with him; how he entered into the house of God, and did eat the shewbread, which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them which  
 5 were with him, but only for the priests? Or have ye not read in the Law, how that on the sabbath days the priests in  
 6 the temple profane the sabbath, and are blameless? But I say unto you, That in this place is one greater than the  
 7 temple. But if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the

bread on the Sabbath. But His act is in any case a breach of the ceremonial law under which the Sabbatic law comes. The principle is that human need is above the ceremonial law.

*read*—i.e. as readers in the synagogue. A reader, even more than a hearer, should understand what he is reading. *they . . . him*. In 1 Sam. xxi. 1-6 David was alone. It may have been the current opinion that he was accompanied. His companions are here mentioned to correspond with the disciples, the leaders and their companions in each case being identified in the act.

Ver. 4. *house of God*. So the Tabernacle is called (Ex. xxiii. 19). It may be only the outer court into which David is spoken of as having entered, not the inner sanctuary, where the shewbread was on a table; but David is not said to have entered the Tabernacle at all in 1 Sam. The condensed account of the story may be responsible for the looseness of the quotation.

Ver. 5. A second illustration from the Law itself. The priests are required (Num. xxviii. 9) to do handwork on the Sabbath, i.e. to profane the Sabbath on the scribal principle that no work is allowed. *blameless*. Because ordered by the Law to work.

Ver. 6. *in this place*. Here where they are now standing. *one greater*—"something greater," in this indefinite way referring to His own Person. The Temple was to the Jews the centre of holiness, above the Law. The requirements of the Temple therefore suspended the operation of the Sabbatic law in the case of the priests (ver. 5). Jesus stands above the Temple. He represents something greater, as God has come in Him in a fuller measure than He came into the Temple. The demands of His service, therefore, *a fortiori* suspend the Sabbatic law. This implies that the hunger came on the disciples while engaged in His service.

Ver. 7. *But*. The Pharisees might not be expected to know the greatness of Christ, or the urgency of His service; but if they had known that God had declared the claims of humanity to be superior to all religious observances, they would not have condemned those who, on grounds unknown to their critics, were guiltless. Hos. vi. 6 has already been quoted (ix. 13). Here the Pharisees' Sabbatarian zeal is attributed to a want of human sympathy and to a want of understanding of Scripture, on which they rest their authority.

8 guiltless. For the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day.

Ver. 8. *For*. Giving the reason for the innocence of the disciples. Guiltless because, being engaged in His service, they were identified with Him who is Lord of the Sabbath. *Lord . . . day*. Possessing authority to determine how the Sabbath is to be used. This rests on His being the Son of Man (cf. Appendix, note). In Mark ii. 27, 28 this saying is deduced from the principle that "the sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath." Hence some hold that the Son of Man here=man, as in Ezekiel, or is a mistranslation of an original "therefore man is lord of the sabbath." But Christ never makes man the authority over that which was made for him. The thought in Mark ii. 27 is that the Sabbath is designed to meet man's needs as known to God, not an institution whose needs man has to meet. As the Son of Man, it is His vocation to meet man's needs, and therefore He has authority to decide finally how the Sabbath is to be used. Men take their orders from Him, not from themselves.

#### XII. 9-14. SECOND SABBATH CONTROVERSY.

9 And when he was departed thence, he went into their syna-  
10 gogue: and, behold, there was a man which had his hand  
withered. And they asked him, saying, Is it lawful to heal  
11 on the sabbath days? that they might accuse him. And he  
said unto them, What man shall there be among you that  
shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the sabbath  
12 day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out? How much  
then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to

Vers. 9, 10. *their*=Galileans, as xi. 1, though it might mean the local Pharisees of ver. 2. *heal*. The previous incident turned on work performed to meet one's own need, this on work done to meet another's need. *accuse*. The accusation turns on His doing a deed which would be a breach of the Sabbath, not on His justifying His deed. So Mark's account, where the Pharisees watch but do not ask the question, is to be preferred.

Ver. 11. *one sheep*. All that the man possesses, therefore of all the more value to him. *will he not*. The Talmud argues the point, allowing it if there were danger to life, but discussing it in such a casuistical way as to leave a man doubtful what to do. But this is probably the theorising of later times. The argument here implies that it was the practice in Christ's day, at least in unsophisticated common life, to which He so often appeals.

Ver. 12. Cf. vi. 26, x. 31 for a similar way of suggesting the infinite value of the human soul, the failure to realise which lay at the root of the Pharisaic error. *Wherefore*. The supreme value of

- 13 do well on the sabbath days. Then saith he to the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it forth; and it  
 14 was restored whole, like as the other. Then the Pharisees went out, and held a council against him, how they might destroy him.

a man strengthens the obligation to do well which is required even when a sheep is affected. *to do well*=either to do good or to do what is right—one's duty. Instead of simply saying to heal, He goes back to the fundamental moral obligation which governs the actions of all days, and cannot be suspended by the Sabbath.

Ver. 13. *Then*. With the courage of His convictions, clenching His word with the deed. *Stretch forth*. To make it clear that He has done the deed, the interest lying not in the cure but in the controversy. *restored*. Merely emphasising the completeness of the cure. Whether cured before he stretched it forth or in the act, is not thought of.

## XII. 15-21. JESUS' RETIRING AND BENEFICENT DISPOSITION.

- 15 But when Jesus knew it, he withdrew himself from thence: and great multitudes followed him, and he healed them all;  
 16 and charged them that they should not make him known:  
 17 that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the  
 18 prophet, saying, Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my

Vers. 15, 16 are from Mark iii. 7-12, condensed to show how Jesus, by His avoidance of publicity and quiet, beneficent activity, fulfilled Isa. xlii. 1-4. Jesus' retiral Matthew attributes to His dislike of strife, and His charge to the people to His desire to avoid provoking hostility.

Ver. 17. It was not, of course, Jesus' intention to fulfil this prophecy which made Him act so, but Matthew sees a Divine intention fulfilled in the result.

Ver. 18. The quotation mostly follows the Hebrew with certain changes which may be due to his using some Greek version other than the LXX, with which the quotation does not correspond except in ver. 21. It is Matthew's meaning we have to find in the words, not Isaiah's. *servant*. The Greek word may mean "son," which would make it correspond with son in iii. 17, as one would expect. *my beloved*. Cf. iii. 17. To Matthew it="Messiah." *have chosen . . . is well pleased*—"chose," "was well pleased." The eternal election of Christ was an Apostolic idea, and that is probably what the past tense signifies here (cf. xi. 27). *put my Spirit*—as in the Baptism (cf. iii. 16 and ver. 28). *show*—"announce." *judgment*. In the



Spirit upon him, and he shall show judgment to the Gentiles.  
 19 He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear his  
 20 voice in the streets. A bruised reed shall he not break, and  
 smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judg-  
 21 ment unto victory. And in his name shall the Gentiles trust.  
 Hebrew "right," to Matthew it will refer to the day of judgment  
 (cf. x. 15).

Ver. 19. *strive*. Neither in the Hebrew nor the LXX—a striking contrast to the quarrelsome Pharisees. *cry*. Of excited screaming, as Acts xxii. 23—the calm of Christ. *hear . . . streets*. Of His avoidance of publicity, as in vers. 15, 16.

Ver. 20. *A bruised . . . quench*. Descriptive of His healing ministry to the sick and of His tenderness, particularly to those, like the publicans and sinners, in whom goodness is very weak and almost lost. The flax is a lamp-wick made of flax dying down in its socket. *till . . . victory*. A combination of vers. 3 and 4 in Isa. xlii., with a change of "truth" to "victory." The final victory of Christ consummated at the day of judgment, which precedes the inauguration of the kingdom (cf. 1 Cor. xv. 25).

Ver. 21. *in his name*. In that which He is and stands for, represented by His name. *trust*—"hope." *the Gentiles*. Simply "Gentiles" (cf. viii. 5-13). Christ the hope of the whole world.

## XII. 22-37. THE PHARISAIC SLANDER.

22 Then was brought unto him one possessed with a devil, blind  
 and dumb: and he healed him, insomuch that the blind  
 23 and dumb both spake and saw. And all the people were  
 24 amazed, and said, Is not this the son of David? But when  
 the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow doth not

Ver. 22. This miracle is mentioned to introduce the slander of the Pharisees. It is so similar to the miracle in ix. 32 that it is probably a varying account of the same. The demoniac is blind and dumb, while in ix. 32 he is only dumb; but in the parallel in Luke xi. 14 also he is only dumb.

Ver. 23. *is not this?*—"this cannot be, can it perhaps?" The idea that Jesus is the Messiah, though He is so different from their conception of the Messiah, begins for the first time to suggest itself to the people. Their unbelief is far stronger than their faith, but they do not feel sure of denying His Messiahship. *the . . . David*. Popular designation of the Messiah.

Ver. 24. *heard it*. This word of the people. The Pharisees are alarmed at the first symptom of the people's faith, and make haste to quench it by slander. The extraordinary power of Jesus over the demons cannot be questioned. They try to destroy the natural impression of its meaning by attributing it to an alliance with Satan,

cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils.  
 25 And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand:  
 26 and if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself;  
 27 how shall then his kingdom stand? And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out?  
 28 therefore they shall be your judges. But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto  
 29 you. Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house,

*Beelzebub.* Cf. n. on x. 25. Matthew, like Luke, here identifies Beelzebub with Satan, the prince of the devils; but they are both quoting and condensing Mark iii. 22, who appears to distinguish them.

Ver. 25. *their thoughts.* Not the slander which was publicly uttered, but the malicious motive behind it, to slander His character in order to destroy His influence. *kingdom.* Appropriate to the popular conception lying in the Pharisaic charge, that Satan is a king ruling over a kingdom of devils. *house.* Probably in a political sense (cf. the house of Lysanias = the reigning dynasty).

Ver. 26. *Satan . . . Satan.* The same Satanic power, alleged to work through Jesus, as possesses the demoniacs. Jesus so states the case as to bring out its absurdity. *is divided*—"was divided," *i.e.* when he cast out himself.

Ver. 27. *your children* = "men of your own party," like yourselves; a similar expression to "sons of the kingdom" (viii. 12). The reference is to Jewish exorcists. There is no thought of their work being on the same level as His own. It is an *argumentum ad hominem*. *your judges.* Convicting you of deliberate slander, because they would not ascribe their power of demon expulsion to Satanic agency.

Ver. 28. *by . . . God.* The only inference left. The Spirit came on Him at His baptism (iii. 16). Jesus does not use herbs or formulæ or any of the methods of the Jewish exorcists. He works directly by the spiritual power residing in Him. *then.* The conclusion therefore follows which the Pharisees refuse to accept. *is come*—"came," *i.e.* when I began this work. The Kingdom of God is here spoken of as coming with Christ, or more exactly as come when He cast a devil out of a human being. When the consummation of the kingdom is thought of, its coming is then spoken of as lying in the future, and is called by Matthew the Kingdom of the Heavens.

Ver. 29 reminiscent of Isa. xlix. 24. *Or else.* If you refuse to admit that the Kingdom is come. The curing of demoniacs is spoken of parabolically as a spoiling of Satan's (the strong man's) house. The power to do so presupposes that Satan has been previously conquered. This previous mastering of Satan can only have occurred in Jesus' own life—such a victory as is recorded in

and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and  
 30 then he will spoil his house. He that is not with me is  
 against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth  
 31 abroad. Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and  
 blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy  
 against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men.  
 32 And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it

iv. 1-11, before Jesus began His public work=entering into the strong man's house. Spiritual power to drive evil out of men is possible only if one has been a moral victor in one's own life. Jesus' perfect victory in temptation means that the Kingdom, the reign of God, has come, with and in Jesus. He has bound, *i.e.* mastered and reduced to impotence, but not destroyed Satan.

Ver. 30. Jesus now turns from self-defence to warn the Pharisees (1) There can only be two sides: the side of Jesus, in whom the Spirit of God is and the Kingdom is come unto them in power to expel evil; and the side of Satan, against and outside the power of the Kingdom=the power of Christ. There can be no neutral position. Not to side with Jesus is *ipso facto* to side with Jesus' enemy. (2) There can only be two results of work: gathering and scattering. The idea is taken from a harvest (cf. iii. 12, vi. 26). The harvest is God's and produced by God, as in ix. 37. In seeking to dissipate the impression made on the people (ver. 23), the Pharisees are scattering God's harvest, doing the work of Satan, the destroyer of God's work. In seeking to lead on the people's incipient faith, Jesus is gathering them into the kingdom.

Ver. 31. *Wherefore*. Referring to the whole argument (cf. vers. 25-30). *blasphemy*. Slander against what is holy. *forgiven*. On the supposition of repentance, of course. *the blasphemy . . . Ghost*. The guilt of the Pharisees includes the following elements: (1) Enmity against Christ; (2) slander of His character, imputing the admitted good He does to Satanic influence; (3) this is a deliberate and conscious falsehood, not due to temporary passion or ignorance, but to malice; (4) they do not repent of it; (5) they try to produce the same impression on the souls of others and destroy the work of the Spirit in them. It is clear, therefore, that the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit consists in deliberately calling good evil, knowing the good to be good, maintaining this attitude without repentance to the end, and intentionally striving to produce the same moral perversion in others. The unforgiveness can only lie in this, that this state of soul is insusceptible to the Holy Spirit, the impenitence becoming incapacity for repentance, the faculty for distinguishing right from wrong being lost. That the Pharisees had reached this stage is not asserted, but they are warned that they may reach it and are on the verge of it.

Ver. 32. Repeating the thought of ver. 31. to make it clearer. *a word . . . man*. The Spirit of God in the Son of Man, the power

- shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this  
 33 world, neither in the world to come. Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by his fruit.  
 34 O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the  
 35 mouth speaketh. A good man, out of the good treasure of the heart, bringeth forth good things: and an evil man, out of the evil treasure, bringeth forth evil things.

revealed in His casting out demons, is distinguished from the Son of Man who is the Mediator of the Spirit. Jesus, the Son of Man, may be misunderstood in His Person and opposed in His work, as He was by Saul of Tarsus. "I did it ignorantly in unbelief" (1 Tim. i. 13). That is a different thing from consistently opposing the light and maliciously twisting a clear knowledge and conviction of the Spirit of God. In Mark iii. 28, 29 there is no mention of a "word against the Son of man," and as it would be barely possible to distinguish between a slander against the character of the Son of Man and a blasphemy against the Holy Spirit in Him, some suppose that Mark's is the original saying, and that the "Son of man" in Matthew and Luke is a mistranslation of an original Aramaic "sons of men" = men, a phrase which occurs in Mark iii. 28. This is possible, but such a distinction between opposition to Christ wrongly conceived in ignorance, and opposition to a felt conviction of the Spirit of God known to be true, as Matthew and Luke give, is called for.

*neither . . . come.* World = æon = age. Jesus uses the language of Jewish apocalyptic, which distinguished between the age up to and the age after Messiah's coming, when the kingdom, with its transformation of things, would be established, ushered in by a great final act of judgment. Nothing can be drawn out of *neither . . . nor* but the absolute unforgivableness of this sin. If we try to press the apocalyptic language to imply that other sins unforgiven in this age may be forgiven in the future, does not the intervening act of judgment exclude this implication? But all that can, will be forgiven (cf. xviii. 21, 22).

Vers. 33-35 are similar to sayings already given by Matthew in vii. 17-20. *make* = "declare." Either declare My works good, and therefore due to the good Spirit of God, or declare them evil, and therefore due to Satanic influence. *generation*—"offspring" (cf. iii. 7). Their slanderous words are due to their evil nature. Words come out of that with which the heart, including the mind as well as the affections, is overflowing like a fountain. Ver. 35 contains the same thought as ver. 34, only while in ver. 34 the nature is conceived as acting spontaneously, here the action of the man in selecting and vigorously sending forth what is in his heart, his storehouse, is prominent.

- 36 But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.  
 37 For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.

Vers. 36, 37. *idle*. Either ineffectual, doing neither harm nor good to any other, or "empty," as when nothing is meant by it. Jesus does not specially condemn idle words, but seeks to emphasise a man's responsibility for his words by declaring that for every word, even the idlest, a man must give account. The reason is that judgment goes by a man's words (ver. 37), a word being (vers. 34, 35) the revelation of the heart within. In xxv. 31-46 judgment goes by deeds or want of them. The one view supplements the other. The judgment turns actually on the man's character, which is expressed and moulded both by his words and deeds, or by his silence and his doing nothing.

## XII. 38-42. THE REQUEST FOR A SIGN.

- 38 Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered,  
 39 saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee. But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given  
 40 to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: for as Jonas was

Ver. 38. *Then*. Synchronous with the Pharisaic slander. *certain*. Luke xi. 16 makes them a different set of men from those who uttered the slander. *Master*—"Rabbi." *a sign*—viz. that the kingdom of God had come with Jesus unto them (ver. 28), i.e. that Jesus was the Messiah. The sign they wished was something different from the curing of demoniacs and His healing works, something striking the senses, done by God at Jesus' request, in which a man could have no part, as Jesus had in His healing works. It is an impossible request, as spirit can only be revealed by spirit. Cf. 1 Cor. i. 22 for the Jewish lust for signs, oblivious of the spiritual message of the word.

Vers. 39, 40. *adulterous*. Unfaithfulness to God, particularly idolatry, was stigmatised as adultery by the O.T. prophets, who loved to use the marriage relation, so sacredly regarded by the Jews, as descriptive of the relation of God to His people. The lust for a sign is attributed to moral perversion ("evil") and spiritual alienation from God. *generation*. The question was put by Pharisees. The answer is addressed to the people, the request of the Pharisees being typical of the age. *whale*—"monster." *heart of the earth*. Not the grave, but Hades, the unseen abode of the departed, which was conceived of as being in the heart of the earth.

*the sign . . . Jonas*. This is explained in ver. 40 as referring to the Resurrection of Christ. From Luke xi. 30 we should infer

three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the  
 41 earth. The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is  
 42 here. The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment

that Jonah's preaching of repentance was the point in view, Jonah being chosen from among the preachers of repentance as the only prophet sent to a heathen nation, and as being recognised by heathen Nineveh as a voice from God, *i.e.* a sign from heaven. So Jesus in His whole life and ministry of word and deed as the Son of Man would be the sign from God to His generation; the future tense being used because His life and ministry were not yet complete. This exactly suits the context. Accordingly, some hold that Matthew, in ver. 40, has put his own interpretation on the saying of Jesus, understanding it as referring to the Resurrection, which was in apostolic times regarded as the supreme witness of God to the Messiahship of Jesus. The "three days and three nights" are obviously suggested by Jonah i. 17. But only one day and part of other two days, certainly only two nights, intervened between the Death and Resurrection of our Lord. The phrase "three days," after which Christ, in Mark viii. 31, etc., predicted that He would rise again, was probably a proverbial way of expressing a very short period (*cf.* Hos. vi. 2). Matthew turns that into a definite time-period to make it correspond with Jonah i. 17. This interpretation looks very probable. At the same time, the Resurrection is the culmination of Christ's life, and must be included in the sign which was constituted by His whole life and ministry, and would be covered by the future tense, and Jesus' prediction of His Resurrection is frequently attested. It must be carefully noted that, in contrast to the sign requested, the sign to be given was to be of a spiritual nature. The Resurrection was indeed a physical miracle, but so also were the other miracles, and yet they were not the sort of sign they lusted after. Besides, the Resurrection was of such a spiritual nature that the Risen Christ was only seen by His disciples—kindred spirits.

Ver. 41 to be connected with ver. 40. *The men of Nineveh*—and they were heathen. *shall rise*. Not of their resurrection from the dead, but of appearing as witnesses, which necessarily, however, presupposes their resurrection (*cf.* Mark xiv. 57). *in judgment*—"in the judgment," *i.e.* the day of judgment. *with*—"in company with." *condemn*—*i.e.* bring about its condemnation by witnessing against it. *a greater*—"something greater,"—neuter, as in xii. 6,—either a greater ministry, or it is simply an impersonal reference to His own Person.

Ver. 42. *The queen of the south*. From Sheba, in S. Arabia (1 Kings x. 1). *the uttermost . . . earth*. Popular hyperbole for a far

with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here.

country, such a long journey, no effort too much. *a greater*—"something greater." Greater wisdom, or as ver. 41. *here*. In their midst. No journey nor effort needed, and yet no repentance!

## XII. 43-45. THE BACKSLIDER.

- 43 When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh  
44 through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. Then  
he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came  
out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and  
45 garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven  
other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and  
dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the  
first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation.

In Luke xi. 24-26 the words seem to describe the temporary success of the Jewish exorcists; here they explain how the insusceptibility of the present generation to Christ's ministry is due to the deeper spiritual degeneracy resulting from falling back after temporary reformation to the former condition. The illustration is drawn from the prevailing notions of demonology.

Ver. 43. *unclean*. As opposed to the pure Spirit of God. *walketh*. Better, "passeth." The spirit is viewed as bodiless. *dry*—"waterless." Of the desert, the popular haunt of demons, whence the demon had come into the man.

Ver. 44. *return . . . house*. The incorporeal spirit seeks to find rest by embodying itself in some form of animal life (cf. viii. 31). Finding none in the desert, it decides to return to the man, the house, whence it was driven out.

*empty . . . garnished*. Some interpret the garnishing, the ornamentation, of sin (fascinating pleasures, etc.); others of grace, which is impossible, as grace would keep out the evil spirit; others of sin counterfeiting grace. The scenery of the illustration is, however, not to be pressed further than the description of a soul untenanted by the Spirit of God, and yet in every respect prepared for a tenant—a standing invitation. The truth is that there is no safety in a negative salvation. Cleansing from sin is insufficient without an activity in goodness. A man must be possessed by some spirit. A mind must think. The living must live, and are impelled to action.

"For Satan finds some mischief still  
For idle hands to do."

Ver. 45. *seven other spirits*. In the Babylonian demonology, which lies at the back of these popular notions, seven evil spirits appear. The number seven, symbolic of completeness, is a favourite

number in ancient thought (cf. i. 17), resting ultimately on astrological ideas, which saw significance in the seven days of the week—moon-worship.

*the last state.* Sin after repentance produces deeper moral degradation. It is a sin not of ignorance but against the light, and the conscience is disastrously hurt. The plunge is deeper from the greater height. *Even so.* The people had repented at former preaching, but had fallen back. Hence their condition of insusceptibility to Christ. Some think the preaching of the prophets and the repentance from idolatry at the Exile, with the subsequent lapsing to idolatry in the new form of Pharisaic idolatry of the letter of the law, is thought of. That is suggestive—only it must be remembered that Pharisaism preserved the people from being absorbed into paganism. *shall it be,* however, puts the picture of the last state into the future, and can only refer to their insane crucifixion of the Messiah. Accordingly, it is preferable to think of the repentance produced by the preaching of the Baptist, described in iii. 5, 6, as affecting the nation, including also perhaps the earlier ministry of Jesus, when Galilee at least was moved by His preaching. The tide is turning now.

## XII. 46-50. THE INTERFERENCE OF JESUS' RELATIVES.

- 46 While he yet talked to the people, behold, his mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him.  
 47 Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy  
 48 brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee. But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my  
 49 mother? and who are my brethren? And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother  
 50 and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.

Ver. 46. *While . . . people.* Synchronising with the Pharisaic slander. *brethren*—"brothers," sons of Joseph and Mary (cf. Mark vi. 3). *without.* In Mark iii. 19 outside of the house in which Jesus was. Here it can only mean on the outskirts of the crowd. The word is probably simply taken over from Mark (cf. xiii. 1).

*desiring.* Explained by Mark iii. 21, "He is beside himself," which is omitted by Matthew, as probably too harsh a thought to come from the family circle. They were anxious for His safety, and wished to draw Him away from a dangerous situation, into which they thought He had needlessly come by provoking hostility through over-excitement. They did not understand His enthusiasm for God. There is no reason for inferring any conflict between Jesus and His relatives. It is only anxious concern for His welfare which moves them.

Vers. 49, 50. Jesus does not disown nor depreciate the ties of blood-relationship, but He will not be disturbed by them in His



work. The claims of His Father in His duty are above the claims of their affection (cf. viii. 22). True relationship to Him is spiritual affinity. The sons of His Father are His nearest relatives, and sonship is constituted by the spirit of filial obedience to God's will. His relatives by blood are no nearer to Him spiritually than any others may be, than these very disciples, and (ver. 50) all others who, like them, are the sons of His Father—as is shown by their doing His will—and therefore the members of Jesus' spiritual family.

### XIII.

Vers. 1-52 contain a group of parables, massed together as the sayings are massed in the Sermon on the Mount.

#### XIII. 1-9. THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER— SPIRITUAL RESULTS CONDITIONED BY CHARACTER.

- 1 THE same day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the
- 2 sea-side. And great multitudes were gathered together unto him, so that he went into a ship, and sat; and the whole
- 3 multitude stood on the shore. And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to

Ver. 1. *The same day.* Matthew, as his habit is, turns Mark's general connection of this parable with the incident of Jesus' relatives into immediate temporal sequence. *out of the house.* In which (Mark iii. 19) Jesus was when His relatives sought Him, though Matthew has not mentioned that (cf. xii. 46). *sat.* The teacher's position in the East (cf. v. 1).

Ver. 2. *great multitudes.* No evidence yet of any waning in Jesus' popularity, despite xii. 39-45; but these things are not related in their actual historical sequence. The Parable of the Sower of itself shows that, despite the crowds, Jesus is considerably disappointed with the results of His work among them. *ship*—"boat."

Ver. 3. *parables.* It is not to be supposed that Jesus spoke all the parables in this chapter on the same occasion. For Luke relates the Parables of the Mustard Seed and the Leaven on a different occasion from that of the Parable of the Sower. Matthew has grouped seven (one of his favourite numbers) parables together to illustrate Jesus' parabolic teaching.

The parabolic method was not an original way of speaking devised by Jesus. Parables are found in the O.T., were employed by the Rabbis, and are very common in later Jewish literature. A parable, as used by Jesus, is a picture drawn from nature or life to represent or suggest a spiritual truth. It turns round one central idea, and we must beware of allegorising the details and the scenery. But the one central idea may radiate out in various directions, as in the Parable of the Sower. It is the recoil from false allegorising

4 sow : and when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way-side,  
 5 and the fowls came and devoured them up : some fell upon  
 stony places, where they had not much earth ; and forth-  
 with they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth :  
 6 and when the sun was up, they were scorched ; and because  
 7 they had no root, they withered away : and some fell among  
 8 thorns ; and the thorns sprung up and choked them : but  
 other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some  
 9 an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold. Who hath  
 ears to hear, let him hear.

which makes some insist that there is only one single idea taught in each parable. It is true, however, that there is only one governing idea making the *motif* of the parable. But the very possibility of the parable depends on the unity of all life, on the consequent analogy between the natural and the spiritual world, and is built up by the observation of their likenesses. Sidelights, always in harmony with the guiding idea, are therefore to be looked for in a picture that is true to life, in a story that expresses the universal. *a sower*—"the sower," the man whose work it is to sow.

Ver. 4. The hard soil. *by the way-side*. Not the public road, but the footpath which ran across the field, or, it might be, at times skirted it. Cf. xii. 1, where Jesus and His disciples went through the corn-fields, *i.e.* along the footpath. *fowls*. The birds picked up the seed which lay uncovered on the surface of this hard soil. This soil may be naturally as good as the best in the field : its fault lies in its being beaten hard by the feet of the passers-by.

Vers. 5, 6. The shallow soil. *upon stony places*. Where the bed-rock had only a thin covering of soil. *forthwith*. Not being able to make roots by striking down, it sprang up at once—the first on the field. *scorched . . . away*. Not having roots to draw moisture and strength from the soil beneath.

Ver. 7. The dirty soil. *among thorns*—"upon the thorns," upon soil which was full of thorn seed. The Eastern farmer was no doubt often negligent in cleaning the soil. The thorns sprang up with the corn, but, growing more vigorously, choked it.

Ver. 8. The good soil—*i.e.* soft, deep, and clean. *some an hundredfold*. Each single seed of corn bore a hundred grains in the ear. This soil also varies in its yield, but all is productive.

Ver. 9. A call to think on the meaning of the parable (cf. n. on xi. 15). The parable describes the experience of Christ in His ministry, which is typical of universal experience. He finds the reason for the varying effect of His ministry in the varying spiritual condition of men. Some were altogether insusceptible ; others were quickly impressed, but the impression passed away. In others the new spiritual impulses struggled to grow, but were finally crushed by stronger passionate evil lusts. In others there were rich and permanent results, though varying in abundance.

## XIII. 10-17. THE PURPOSE OF PARABOLIC SPEECH.

10 And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest  
 11 thou unto them in parables? He answered and said unto  
 them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of  
 12 the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. For  
 whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have  
 more abundance; but whosoever hath not, from him shall

Ver. 10. *the disciples*. In view of Mark's "they that were about him with the twelve," *disciples* may be used in the wider sense, but most probably Matthew means the Twelve. *them* = the multitude—implying, "not to us." *in parables*. In Mark Jesus is asked the meaning of the parable just spoken, here the reason why He makes use of parables in addressing the people. That Jesus should not speak truth plainly is a difficulty demanding an explanation. It was all the more difficult to the disciples, who expected the Messiah to set up the kingdom immediately. Why this want of open declaration? *came*. In Mark, after addressing the people, when He was alone—the natural occasion. Here they seem to interrupt the address and get an answer on the spot; but that is only due to Matthew's arrangement of his material (cf. n. on ver. 3).

Ver. 11. *it is given*—lit. "has been given," a present possession in virtue of a past gift. In Mark iv. 11 and Luke viii. 10 the gift clearly consists in having the parables or parable (Luke) explained to them, while to the people is given only the parable, without the explanation (cf. Mark iv. 34). But in Matthew the meaning as clearly is that Jesus does not speak in parables to the disciples, but gives them the truth directly, not as it is merely suggested by a parable. *to know the mysteries*. A mystery in the N.T. is a truth not formerly known but now revealed. It does not mean a riddle in the modern sense of what remains inexplicable. Mark iv. 11 has the singular. The plural, loved by Matthew (cf. viii. 26), means the various truths of the kingdom. The true reading in Mark is "to you is given the mystery," but the possession of truth is the knowledge of it. *to them it is not given*. Covering both what has been taught to the people but not understood nor received by them, and what Jesus has taught the disciples but not the people. It is substituted for Mark's "unto them which are without all things happen in parables," which means that to those who are not disciples truth is conveyed only by parables, and that is Matthew's meaning, or else it means, but improbably, that all His teaching is like a parable not understood.

Ver. 12. A saying occurring also in Mark iv. 25; Luke viii. 18 (cf. also Matt. xxv. 29; Luke xix. 26). The truth that the rich grow richer and the poor grow poorer is a law of life capable of many applications. It here gives the reason why the truths of the kingdom are given to the disciples and not to the multitude. *hath*. What the disciples have, which the others have not, is spiritual susceptibility

13 be taken away even that he hath. Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing, see not; and hearing,

which lies at the root of faith and love, and following from this susceptibility, under the teaching of Jesus, a certain knowledge of the kingdom. *shall be given*—i.e. the truths of the kingdom. To knowledge is given more knowledge. The susceptibility itself also increases, and with it is given increasing knowledge and increasing opportunity to know. One door of knowledge passed through leads to another. One truth grasped becomes the key to another, and so the subject opens up. *he shall have more abundance*—"it shall be in superabundance," so fast does it increase. The rich grow richer, and are even embarrassed by riches. *hath not*—i.e. spiritual susceptibility. *taken away*. What he loses, he loses through the operation of this law, and therefore his loss is viewed as a punishment for culpable lack of susceptibility. *even that he hath*. Having without understanding Luke (viii. 18) calls "a seeming to have," which is true, because without understanding a truth one never really has it. But more is meant than "a seeming to have." Listening to Jesus they do get something—impressions, words, even to some extent thoughts—and the point is that the man without spiritual susceptibility loses even that amount of knowledge which he got and which was the beginning of real knowledge and, if followed up, would have resulted in it. But the mere impression not held on to, the thought not understood, hesitating on the threshold of the mind slips away. It is further meant that, as with the disciples the susceptibility which they have increases, so with the others even their slight susceptibility, so slight that it is called a "hath not," is taken away. The poor grow poorer, and indeed miserably indigent.

Ver. 13. Vers. 11, 12 have explained why Jesus does not use parables with His disciples. They are capable of knowing the truth directly stated, as, e.g., in the Sermon on the Mount. The people have not this capacity. We should therefore expect that Jesus' reason for using parables would be to suggest the truth in a way that might reach them, and this is stated in ver. 13 through changing Mark's (iv. 12) "that" (=in order that) into "because." Matthew may have taken Mark to mean that it was Jesus' intention to conceal the truth, which would appear palpably absurd. Absolute silence would better have served such a purpose. But Christ in Mark is simply stating the operation of a moral law, which in its action, negative as well as positive, is from the religious point of view the intention of God. As He has intended that the truth should be revealed to the susceptible, so also has He intended that it should be concealed from insusceptibility. A parable as contrasted with direct statement does conceal the truth, while as contrasted with silence it is a suggestion of truth. Because of the spiritual incapacity of the people Jesus is driven to use this method of speech, which relatively conceals truth, and for the same reason is prevented from expounding to them the hidden meaning. This relative con-

- 14 they hear not; neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, 15 and shall not perceive: for this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. 16 But blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for

cealment is a punishment designed of God, for which, in Matt. xi. 25, Jesus praises God. Mark therefore speaks of the parable as effecting the judgment of God. But the only reason that Jesus had for using parables was to try and reach them in this way. Matthew also, in vers. 14, 15, traces the spiritual incapacity of the people, after Isa. vi. 9, 10, to a judgment of God upon them. But he makes the existing incapacity of the people the result of that judgment, and the parables an attempt to reach them indirectly, which would equally be the intention of God in His grace, though Matthew is not thinking of that, but only of Jesus' reason for using parables. We have, therefore, two different points of view, not contradictory but supplementary—judgment for culpable insusceptibility causing concealment of truth; grace seeking to reach and save them from this punishment of their sin.

Vers. 14, 15. The introductory words "in (for) them . . . Esaias" are not the regular formula in i. 22, etc., and the O.T. is quoted from the LXX, as it is not in these other cases. This suggests that Matthew did not find this in the same source as he found the others, but inserted it himself, expanding Mark iv. 12. *fulfilled*. Isaiah is only describing the spiritual condition of his generation, but the analogy between the conditions then and now is called a fulfilment of prophecy. Jesus in Mark simply uses Isaiah's words to express the effect of His own work.

Ver. 15. *heart*. Including the mind as well as the affections. *is waxed gross*—"was made fat," *i.e.* by God. The punishment of their sin is to be made insusceptible to spiritual truth. *and*=and so. The deafness and blindness is the effect of the insusceptibility. *lest*, etc. If they had the power to perceive the truth, they might change, and so escape their punishment. This is bitter irony. *heal*. If they should turn, *i.e.* from their evil thoughts and ways, nothing could keep God from healing them.

Vers. 16, 17. For the reproach addressed to the disciples in Mark iv. 13, Matthew substitutes a benediction on their privileges, which Luke x. 23, 24 inserts after the return of the Seventy.

Ver. 16. *your*. Emphatic. They are blessed because, in contrast to the blind and deaf people, they possess the faculties for direct perception of spiritual truth, having escaped the judgment.

17 they hear. For verily I say unto you, that many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.

Ver. 17. The prophets and saints of the O.T. (cf. x. 41). *those . . . see*. This only, and not, as in ver. 16, their possession of spiritual faculties, is the privilege for which they are pronounced blessed in Luke. Matthew's change is due to his context. In Matthew *those things* are the revealed truths of the kingdom, in Luke rather the coming of the kingdom in power as seen in the subjection of the spirits—the downfall of Satan.

### XIII. 18-23. INTERPRETATION OF THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER.

18 Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower. When any one  
19 heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not,  
then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which  
was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by  
20 the way-side. But he that received the seed into stony  
places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with  
21 joy receiveth it: yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth

Ver. 18. *therefore*. Matthew, by omitting the disciples' request for an explanation (Mark iv. 10) and Christ's reproach for their not understanding it (Mark iv. 13), makes the interpretation to be given them because they have the capacity to understand it. Objections have been raised to the genuineness of this interpretation on the ground of its allegorising the details. But it is expressly stated in Mark iv. 34 that Jesus did expound the parables to His disciples, and there is no sufficient reason for doubting that this interpretation in the main goes back to Jesus.

Ver. 19. *the word of the kingdom*. The truth, the good news about the kingdom through which a man is enabled to enter it. *understandeth it not*. Not taking it in with his mind, as the soil does not take in the seed. This is inserted only by Matthew, suggested perhaps by vers. 13, 14. The stupidity is not due to a natural want of intellectual power (cf. xi. 25), but to the hardening effect of their habits, resulting in spiritual insensibility. *the wicked one*. Satan is only mentioned in this case; but if active here, he would be active in the others also. The birds of the air would aptly represent the flying powers of evil, the fleeting currents of evil desire, in which Satan works, carrying off the surface impressions of the word. For Satan as the prince of the powers of the air cf. Eph. ii. 2. *This . . . seed*—lit. "this is he who was sown"; a confused way of speaking, taken from Mark iv. 15, for "this is the case of the way-side hearer on whom the seed was sown." The same confusion is seen in the other cases also.

Vers. 20, 21. *anon*—"straightway." *with joy receiveth it*. He is

for a while; for when tribulation or persecution ariseth  
 22 because of the word, by and by he is offended. He also  
 that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the  
 word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of  
 23 riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful. But he  
 that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth  
 the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and  
 bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.

susceptible, and easily impressed; a man of emotion, but not of thought. It is not the joy which is wrong, but the lightness with which it springs up—a giddy nature.

*not root in himself.* Instead of "the word hath not root in him," due to the confusion of the man with the seed. He has no depths for roots to form in. *dwelleth . . . while*—lit. "is temporary," a fickle nature, without any stability. *tribulation or persecution.* Corresponding to the fierce sun heat, which is capable of different applications. Luke has "temptation." No roots, and therefore no resisting power, no endurance. *by and by*—"straightway." *is offended*—"is made to stumble," i.e. into unbelief.

Ver. 22. Worldly lusts compete with spiritual impulses in his divided heart. *heareth the word.* Implying, unlike the first, susceptibility, and, unlike the second, thought as well as emotion. For care cf. vi. 31. *the deceitfulness.* Making transitory worldly goods appear the true eternal good of the soul, which the kingdom alone is. They promise but never give satisfaction to the soul. These are only examples of "thorns." Luke adds pleasures. Worldliness in all its phases, and all kinds of lusts (cf. 1 John ii. 16). *choke.* By crowding out the spiritual impulses. Goodness, like all cultivated life, is a tender plant. Evil, like weeds, has a far more vigorous life. Left to itself, the evil would assuredly devour the good. *he.* Better, "it"=the word.

Ver. 23. Susceptible and receptive, steady of will, single-hearted as well as intelligent. *also.* Of that which necessarily follows. Nothing more than these qualities is needed for fruit-bearing, and nothing less is sufficient. The difference in the yield is in proportion to the strength of these qualities.

### XIII. 24-30. THE PARABLE OF THE TARES—THE TOLERATION OF THE BAD TILL THE CLIMAX.

24 Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed

The problem of the wicked in society (cf. n. on ver. 41), the standing O.T. problem, not in the Church, which, as a visible religious association, is not identical with the kingdom, is here in view. The Messiah was expected to destroy them. Toleration till the climax is here taught.

25 in his field: but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed  
 26 tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the  
 blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared  
 27 the tares also. So the servants of the householder came and  
 said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy  
 28 field? from whence then hath it tares? He said unto them,  
 An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him,

The parable deals with the condition of things between the time of the preaching and reception of the truths of the kingdom and its final inauguration. The first preaching of the kingdom is here looked upon as its entrance on the field of history. That might include O.T. preaching, but is most probably, as in ver. 37, the preaching of Jesus. For the sense in which the bad may be said to be in the kingdom, cf. n. on ver. 41. The parable thinks only of good and bad persons. The evil in disciples is not thought of. They are actually, and not merely ideally, children of the kingdom; not perfect, but growing up to maturity; really in the kingdom already (ver. 41), though their glory is presently hidden (ver. 43) through the presence of wicked persons keeping them down.

The parable is not meant as a warning of judgment for the wicked, but as a hope for the righteous. They are prevented from thinking that the kingdom does not really exist in their midst because of these evil presences in it, and they are encouraged to hold on in the sure hope that there is an end to this mixture of good and evil. The separation is delayed till all have reached maturity, because men are so bound up together that separation under present conditions would hurt the good. Jesus does not, however, think of a final conversion of all the wicked. There is a vigorous growth of evil as well as of good to a climax.

Ver. 24. *unto a man*. The comparison is not with the man but with the whole picture described in the parable, the comparison being, in the rough way of popular speech, attached to the opening word.

Ver. 25. *while men slept*. Not indicating any fault, simply = during the night, described as the time when men and their work are undefended, the enemy's opportunity. *his enemy*. Some one who had a grudge against the farmer. *sowed*—lit. "sowed upon," i.e. right over the field on the top of the wheat, a thoroughgoing work actuated by pure malice. *went his way*. His purpose will fulfil itself. He remains hidden.

Ver. 26. *tares*=darnel—*Lolium temulentum*—so like wheat as to be indistinguishable until the ear is formed. Its fruit is said to be injurious to brain and stomach, a double injury, spoiling the growth of the wheat and threatening life.

Ver. 27. There might be some darnel seed in the ground, but this extensive crop is a mystery to the servants. Only the farmer, who knows what kind of seed he sowed, can explain.

Ver. 28. *An enemy*. Purely an inference based on his knowledge



29 Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he  
 said, Nay; lest, while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also  
 30 the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the  
 harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers,  
 Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles  
 to burn them; but gather the wheat into my barn.

of the seed sown and the extent of the darnel crop. Sowing of darnel in a neighbour's field out of revenge is said to have occurred in the East.

Ver. 29. *root . . . wheat.* The roots being intertwined. In cases where only a few darnel existed, this might be done without serious injury to the wheat crop, and it is said to have been the practice; but it is impossible when the darnel is everywhere. Such interlacing of the roots can only occur in human society, not in the Church. *first.* This selecting and burning of the tares is not the first thing which a farmer would naturally do. The mention of it is due to the allegorical nature of the parable, the removal of the wicked being the first condition necessary for the ideal life of the righteous to break forth in glory (ver. 43). The parable is based on an incident of human life, but it is constructed in view of the spiritual condition of things it is used to depict, and has more of the features of an allegory than the ordinary parable.

### XIII. 31-33. THE PARABLES OF THE MUSTARD SEED AND OF THE LEAVEN—THE INHERENT ENERGY OF THE KINGDOM.

31 Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which  
 32 a man took, and sowed in his field: which indeed is the least of all seeds; but when it is grown, it is the

These parables hang together as a pair, describing how the kingdom, though at its beginning apparently insignificant, will yet, through its own inherent energy, apart from the sympathetic or antipathetic efforts of men, reveal itself as a striking magnitude (ver. 32), fulfilling its ideal (ver. 33). The Parable of the Mustard Seed is commonly viewed as describing its extensive growth, the increase in the number of its adherents; and the Parable of the Leaven as describing its intensive power, penetrating into and transforming both the life of the individual and the life of society. Some think this is reading thoughts into the parables, and confine their meaning to the one thought stated above, and it is always indeed doubtful if Jesus gives any sort of philosophy of history. He is rather a prophet revealing the eternal. But the truth at least of the kingdom does gather adherents and transform the inmost life of the individual and of society. That seems clearly involved in the parables. But the kingdom is here viewed not from its human but from its divine side, and what seems growth from the human side is, looked at from the divine side, the fuller revelation of the eternal, the coming of the ideal into full play, breaking into light and operation through human activity. It can only gain a footing in the world by hearts receiving its truth,

- greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.
- 33 Another parable spake he unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.

as the Parable of the Sower shows. But once it has got that footing, however slender, it comes of itself as well through the resistance as through the co-operation of human wills. That this is the dominant thought of the two parables seems clear, because it is no part of Jesus' thought that all men will be transformed by it. "Till the whole was leavened" can therefore only mean "till the kingdom has realised its own ideal," not till the whole of society is christianised. It is this thought that God will and can by His own energy realise His own ideal, which is the optimism of Jesus, the optimism of faith in God; not the optimism that all things anyway come right.

Vers. 31, 32. *a grain . . . seed.* The common mustard shrub, not the rarer mustard tree, is meant. *the least . . . seeds.* Not absolutely, but relatively to what was then known in Palestine, where it was proverbial for what is insignificantly small. *a tree—i.e.* like a tree in size compared with other herbs. The birds coming to lodge or nest in it is a mere picturesque addition, say some. But it is suggestive of souls attracted to the kingdom for rest and shelter, and, as a shrub whose greatest height is only ten or twelve feet could hardly be the nesting place of many birds, it is most likely that the flocking of souls to the kingdom suggested the thought of the birds.

Ver. 33. *leaven.* Commonly used in a bad sense, of a corrupting influence. There are a few who give it that meaning here, interpreting it of the corrupting influences which hurt Christianity. But that is impossible in a parable which is paired with the Parable of the Mustard Seed. *hid.* By kneading it in. *three measures.* The ordinary quantity the housewife took when she set to bake (cf. Gen. xviii. 6).

### XIII. 34, 35. REFLECTION ON THE PARABLES.

- 34 All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them:

Ver. 34 would be more natural at the end of this collection of parables; but Matthew wants to take the thought of Mark iv. 33, 34 and to add to it ver. 35; and as in Mark it stood after the Parable of the Mustard Seed, with which the Parable of the Leaven was probably combined in the Logia (cf. Luke xiii. 18-21), Matthew inserts it as near that place as possible.

*unto the multitude.* Part of some synagogue discourse, probably, *without a parable.* Of Jesus' general practice of using parables in popular addresses. It is not, however, to be thought that He never spoke to them directly: the multitude were present at the Sermon on the Mount according to Matthew.

35 that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables ; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world.

Ver. 35. *fulfilled* (cf. n. on i. 22). The occurrence of the word "parables" in the LXX has led Matthew to see in Ps. lxxviii. 2 a prophecy of Jesus' parabolic way of speaking. The Psalmist is, however, only referring to the great events in Israel's past history, which reveal the working of God's purpose. Matthew calls the Psalmist a prophet either because he takes the word to be prophetic, or, as it has been suggested, because he assigns the psalm to Isaiah, known as "the prophet." The first sentence comes from the LXX, the second is a free reproduction of the Hebrew. *by . . . world*. Matthew takes that to mean the mysteries (=the truths) of the kingdom revealed by Christ (cf. ver. 11).

### XIII. 36-43. EXPLANATION OF THE PARABLE OF THE TARES.

36 Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house : and his disciples came unto him, saying, Declare unto us  
37 the parable of the tares of the field. He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of  
38 man ; the field is the world ; the good seed are the children of the kingdom ; but the tares are the children of the wicked

Ver. 36. *Then . . . house*. The introduction probably given by Matthew to the following explanation, which he found in his source. *sent . . . away*. Rather, "left," taken from Mark iv. 36. *the house*. Mentioned in ver. 1.

There is no reason to suppose that this explanation is the work of the Evangelist. He found it in his source. It treats the parable so allegorically, however, that it looks like an embodiment of the interpretation of the parable current in Christian circles. It also lays the emphasis on the judgment, but the parable is meant rather to strengthen the faith of disciples in the actual existence of the kingdom despite the presence of evil, and to inculcate a hopeful, tolerant attitude in view of the final separation. We may therefore take the interpretation to be rather a reminiscence than a transcript of Christ's words.

Ver. 37. The sower is identified with Christ. Though what is true of Christ is true also of other sowers, yet it is the state of things existing in His time after His own preaching which is most probably directly in view.

Ver. 38. *the world*—i.e. human society. *the children of the kingdom*—those belonging to the kingdom, in it and yet also destined for the final ideal coming of it, inasmuch as they have the spirit of it and are ruled by God. So *the children of the wicked one* are not those created by the Devil, but those who have his spirit and are ruled by him who is the Prince of this world, and tries to

39 one; the enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels.  
 40 As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire;  
 41 so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity,  
 42 and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be  
 43 wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

make them strong and successful to do as much harm as possible to God, whom he hates. The seed we should regard primarily as the truths sown in men's hearts, and the tares as false opposing principles; but the parable itself makes us think of persons as made by these truths and falsehoods. In vers. 19-23 we have the same identification of the seed with the persons.

Ver. 39. *the end of the world*—"the consummation of the age," a Jewish eschatological phrase for the close of the pre-Messianic age. *angels*. So also in Matt. xxiv. 31. Originally the forces of nature were personified, later the personification extended to spiritual powers, all being the powers of God, and therefore personal. Angelology had become luxuriously developed, powers of darkness, with the Devil as their prince, being personified as well as powers of light. The Son of Man is here Prince over the good angels.

Ver. 41. *out of his kingdom*. They must in some sense be in the kingdom now. It is hardly sufficient to say that when the Son of Man comes, and the wicked are separated from the good, they can then be said to be gathered out of His kingdom. While not spiritually within the kingdom, they are within its present sphere of activity, like the wicked under the O.T. theocracy. Besides, it is on the earth, *i.e.* in human society on the earth, that the kingdom is to be established at the coming of the Son of Man. Though human society is not the kingdom, it is the sphere in which God's rule is operative. They are gathered out of that human society on the earth in the midst of which the kingdom is now, though not in its final ideal form. Cf. notes on ver. 29 and viii. 12.

*all things that offend*=persons who cause others to stumble, especially into unbelief.

*and . . . iniquity*. Not another class of persons. "And" is explanatory. It is by doing iniquity (=lawlessness, acting contrary to the will of God) that they cause others to stumble.

Ver. 42. *furnace of fire*=Gehenna, Hell (cf. n. on v. 22). *wailing . . . teeth*. Another way of picturing the doom of the rejected, the pain not of fire but of cold (cf. n. on viii. 12).

Ver. 43. *shine forth*. From Dan. xii. 3. Their glory has been obscured by the shadow of the wicked, like the sun by clouds. *who . . . hear*. Cf. n. on xi. 15.

## XIII. 44-46. THE PARABLES OF THE HID TREASURE AND OF THE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE—THE SUPREME VALUE PUT UPON THE KINGDOM.

44 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth  
 45 that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a  
 46 merchant-man seeking goodly pearls: who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.

This also is a pair of parables whose common dominant idea is the superlative value of the kingdom, the *summum bonum*, worth the sacrifice of all that a man has. Common elements in both are the unexpected discovery, the immediate appreciation of its worth, the ready, joyful sacrifice which gains far more than it gives up. The distinction between the man who finds though he did not seek—cf. "I am found of them that sought me not" (Isa. lxx. 1)—and the man who finds at the end of a long, enterprising, and venture-some search, though suggestive, is not probably meant to be taught by the parables. It is an equally unexpected surprise for both. The digging of the labourer and the merchantman's seeking of goodly pearls stand on the same level. It was their ordinary work. The one Pearl was as little the object of the merchantman's search as was the Hid Treasure the object of the labourer's digging. The discovery was an accident in both cases. Though the merchantman was seeking in the line of pearls, that thought is not part of the *motif* of the parable. For the thought cf. x. 37; Luke xiv. 26; Matt. xix. 21.

Ver. 44. *like unto treasure*. Like what happens in the story (cf. ver. 24). So ver. 45. *hid*. For security. The secret lost with the hider. *a man*. A wage labourer engaged in digging a field. *hideth*. Covering it up in the ground, in order that the owner of the field might not know. The morality of the proceeding is not in view, only what a man will do to gain a treasure. *for joy thereof*—"because of his joy" (cf. vi. 21 and contrast xiii. 20). The joy of a poor man suddenly made rich. *selleth all . . . hath*. The point of the parable—the test of the value put on the treasure, a sacrifice inspired by joy. He had been a hard-working, saving man. *buyeth*. As the only way to secure the treasure. If it could have been got otherwise, he would not have sold all. Sacrifice is not required for its own sake, only for the kingdom's sake. Jesus was not an ascetic.

Ver. 45. *seeking*. Far away at the pearl fisheries. *found one pearl*. He was looking for pearls, but one so precious was a great surprise. *bought it*. Like the labourer, he did not give full value for the pearl, but he gave all he had. The purchase may be called a speculation, but it was based on experienced judgment. Faith

is a venture of the soul, but sure enough to those who know the value of the kingdom.

His joy is understood, though not mentioned. There is a difference, however, between the unsophisticated joy of the peasant, though he was cunning enough afterwards, and the restraint of the shrewd trader, trained to disguise his feelings for a purpose.

### XIII. 47-50. THE PARABLE OF THE NET—THE INDISCRIMINATE INVITATION TO THE KINGDOM.

47 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was  
48 cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: which, when it  
was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the  
49 good into vessels, but cast the bad away. So shall it be at  
the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever  
50 the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the  
furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

This parable and the parable of the Tares form a pair, with the same leading thought. The kingdom exists in the present, but under temporary conditions contains good and bad. A separation will take place, but only at the judgment, on the final inauguration of the kingdom in glory. Here, however, the presence of the bad in it is due to the free and universal invitation given. The message of the kingdom, the gospel, attracts all kinds of persons. To catch any fish at all, the net must haul in whatever comes within its sweep. The invitation is indiscriminate because the appeal of the kingdom is primarily religious, not ethical. It is a message of love to all (cf. v. 45). The reason given in the parable of the Tares for the delay in separation, that men are all so bound together at present that to separate them would be to hurt the good, is not given in this parable. Neither is the reason given that the bad may become good through repentance, like the Prodigal Son, though that is a reason.

The parable is separated in space from the parable of the Tares, probably because Matthew wishes so to arrange the group that by means of vers. 49, 50 he may leave a strong impression of the moral earnestness of Jesus' teaching. Compare the ending of the Sermon on the Mount. The message of love is wondrous. It is given without any moral conditions. It is sown broadcast, and requires only to be received. It is worth the sacrifice of all that a man has. But the love is no weak sentimentality. The kingdom will only be for those finally who are genuinely good. The final word is a call to a strenuous moral earnestness, in view of a terrible fate awaiting the bad.

Vers. 47, 48. *a net*. The large drag-net which was carried out to sea by a boat and then let down and drawn in from the shore. *of every kind*. Indiscriminately. *sat down*. Of the leisurely work of selection after the fish are caught. *the bad*. Dead and putrescent fish.

Vers. 49, 50 are a repetition of vers. 40-42.

## XIII. 51, 52. CONCLUDING WORDS.

- 51 Jesus saith unto them, Have ye understood all these things?  
 52 They say unto him, Yea, Lord. Then said he unto them,  
 Therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom  
 of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder which  
 bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old.

Ver. 51 serves as an introduction to ver. 52, a saying of Jesus which Matthew uses to conclude his collection of parables. *all these things*=the preceding parables and interpretations.

Ver. 52. *Therefore*. Because they understood these things. *scribe*. Jesus' disciples are to be religious teachers like the scribes, who were the expounders of the law and the traditions (cf. xxviii. 19). *instructed . . . heaven*—lit. "made a scholar of the kingdom of heaven," i.e. one who has been taught the mysteries=the truths of the kingdom revealed by Christ. *treasure*. Properly the treasure-chest in which gold and articles of value, like fine raiment, were kept; probably here of the store for all household articles, which the master of the house distributes according to the needs of the household. *things new and old*. In Matthew's connection the new are the truths hidden in the parables, and the old, the familiar facts of nature and of life used in the parables to suggest the others. Originally the saying had probably a wider reference: truth derived from the O.T. from nature and life (=the old), and from Christ (=the new). Both are needed, as occasion requires.

## XIII. 53-58. NAZARETH'S OFFENCE.

- 53 And it came to pass, that, when Jesus had finished these  
 54 parables, he departed thence. And when he was come into  
 his own country, he taught them in their synagogue, inso-  
 much that they were astonished, and said, Whence hath this  
 55 man this wisdom, and these mighty works? Is not this the  
 carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his

Vers. 53, 54. *thence*. From the house mentioned in xiii. 36; in Mark vi. 1, from Jairus' house. *his own country*=Nazareth. *Whence*. His lowly birth and environment cannot explain the intellectual and spiritual power felt in His teaching and the miraculous power seen in His miracles. Jesus must have received some sort of education at home and at the school of the local synagogue, but the villagers know how elementary it was. He had not been educated like a Rabbi. He was practically self-educated.

Vers. 55, 56. *this*. In a tone of contempt. It is His low birth and their familiarity with Him which provoke contempt. *the*

56 brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this  
 57 man all these things? And they were offended in him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, save  
 58 in his own country, and in his own house. And he did not many mighty works there, because of their unbelief.

*carpenter's son.* Probably substituted out of reverence for Mark's "the carpenter." Joseph was probably dead, as is naturally implied in Mark's calling Him "the son of Mary" (Mark vi. 3). Possibly there would be only one carpenter in the village. *his . . . Mary.* A variation of Mark's "son of Mary"—well known in the village, where everybody knew each other—due to Matthew's change of "the carpenter" into "the carpenter's son." Among the villagers nothing exceptional was known about Jesus' birth.

*brethren*—"brothers." James was afterwards a leader of the Jerusalem Church. The others did not pass out of obscurity. *all with us.* The sisters are resident in Nazareth, probably married there. Possibly the brothers did not all reside there. *Whence then.* Jesus' home and relatives are known to them, and everything about them is quite ordinary. How then can Jesus be exceptional?

Ver. 57. *offended* (cf. n. on xi. 6). They know that He is exceptional, but that only angers them. He ought not to be, because He is only one of themselves, and one of the lowest socially! This is the democratic instinct run mad. They know too much to believe. In reality they know too little. Villagers are often proud of a distinguished fellow-villager, but usually when he is at a distance, his fame won in the great world—or after he is dead. *A prophet.* A proverbial saying occurring in other languages. A man is no hero to his valet. *his own house.* Merely Nazareth is meant, not Mary's house, though xii. 46–50, Mark iii. 21 show that He was above the heads of His relatives.

Ver. 58. Matthew softens Mark's "he could not" into "he did not." Jesus required faith, not arbitrarily, but because the healing depended on it. This reception at Nazareth appears to Matthew the climax of the unsusceptibility Jesus met with.

#### XIV. 1–12. THE BAPTIST'S DEATH.

1 AT that time Herod the tetrarch heard of the fame of Jesus,  
 2 and said unto his servants, This is John the Baptist: he is

Ver. 1. *Herod*—i.e. Herod Antipas (cf. n. on ii. 22). *heard.* Through the mission of the Twelve spreading Jesus' fame, according to Mark.

Ver. 2. *servants.* The State officials. *works*—"powers." Herod thinks that Jesus is John redivivus, and therefore these supernal powers reveal themselves in Him.



risen from the dead; and therefore mighty works do show  
 3 forth themselves in him. For Herod had laid hold on John,  
 and bound him, and put him in prison for Herodias' sake, his  
 4 brother Philip's wife. For John said unto him, It is not law-  
 5 ful for thee to have her. And when he would have put him  
 to death, he feared the multitude, because they counted him  
 6 as a prophet. But when Herod's birthday was kept, the  
 daughter of Herodias danced before them, and pleased  
 7 Herod. Whereupon he promised with an oath to give her  
 8 whatsoever she would ask. And she, being before instructed  
 of her mother, said, Give me here John Baptist's head in a  
 9 charger. And the king was sorry: nevertheless, for the oath's  
 sake, and them which sat with him at meat, he commanded  
 10 it to be given her. And he sent, and beheaded John in the  
 11 prison. And his head was brought in a charger, and given  
 12 to the damsel: and she brought it to her mother. And his

Ver. 3. *For.* His superstition is traced to the fevered imagination of a guilty conscience. *in prison.* The castle of Machærus, on the Dead Sea. *Herodias* was the wife, not of Herod Philip the Tetrarch, but of a son by Mariamne of Herod the Great, a half-brother of Antipas, called, by Josephus, Herod. Salome, the daughter of Herodias, became the wife of Herod Philip. There seems to be a confusion here between Philip and this half-brother.

Ver. 4. Antipas was already married to the daughter of Aretas, King of Arabia. He committed a double sin by marrying Herodias—adultery and marriage within the prohibited degrees.

Ver. 5. In Mark it is Herodias who wished to kill John, while Herod hesitates from scruples of conscience, regarding John as a just and holy man. Matthew may be following another version of the story. Herod may well have wished to kill John, but have been restrained both by fears of conscience and fear of the people. According to Josephus, he was afraid that the popular movement caused by John might end in a revolution.

Vers. 6, 7. *before them.* At the festive gathering of the Court, described by Mark vi. 21. Machærus was a palace as well as a fortress with dungeons. The dance, a Greek custom, was possibly, though not necessarily, indecent. *promised.* The word means confessed to a promise already given, as Mark states, *i.e.* confirmed his promise with an oath.

Ver. 8. *being . . . instructed.* Rather, "being put forward," *i.e.* urged on. *here.* On the spot. No delay, lest Herod's yielding mood, induced by soft, sensual gratification, should pass. *charger, i.e.* a dish.

Ver. 9. *the king.* His title only by courtesy (cf. n. on ii. 22). *sorry.* Herod's sorrow is only to be explained by his respect for John and fear of conscience, recorded by Mark vi. 20.

Ver. 12. *his disciples—i.e.* John's. In Mark vi. 30, however, it is

disciples came, and took up the body, and buried it, and went and told Jesus.

the Twelve who come and tell Jesus about their mission experience, whereupon Jesus departs to give them a rest. The account of John's execution is a parenthesis to explain Herod's superstition about John redivivus, when the fame of Jesus reached his ears through the missionary work of the Twelve.

#### XIV. 13-21. THE FEEDING OF THE FIVE THOUSAND.

- 13 When Jesus heard of it, he departed thence by ship into a  
 14 desert place apart: and when the people had heard thereof,  
 15 they followed him on foot out of the cities. And Jesus went  
 16 forth, and saw a great multitude, and was moved with com-  
 passion toward them, and he healed their sick. And when  
 it was evening, his disciples came to him, saying, This is a  
 desert place, and the time is now past; send the multitude  
 away, that they may go into the villages, and buy themselves  
 victuals. But Jesus said unto them, They need not depart;

Ver. 13. *thence*. From some unknown place on the lake. *apart*. From the crowds. *heard*. Not only of His departure, but of the direction in which He had gone. *on foot*—i.e. by land, not necessarily implying that all walked. The crowd came probably from the cities on the north-west of the lake, and might reach the other side in two or three hours. The scene of the feeding is to be placed on the north-east of the lake, some considerable distance from Bethsaida, which lay on the left at the point where the Jordan enters the lake.

Ver. 14. *went forth*. Probably, as in Mark, out of the boat, the multitude having arrived before Him. Jesus was disappointed in His attempt to escape, but, instead of repelling them, He was moved with compassion (cf. n. on ix. 36) at their intense desire for Him and need of His help. In Mark vi. 34 it is their spiritually shepherdless condition which moves Jesus, and He begins to teach them. Matthew having already mentioned that (ix. 36) substitutes healing for teaching, and makes their sick the object of His compassion. Notice how closely Jesus connects the material and spiritual need of men.

Ver. 15. *evening*. The Jews spoke of two evenings, the first from 3 to 6 o'clock=sunset; the second, after sunset, from 6 to 9. The first evening is here meant. *the time*—i.e. for the evening meal. *villages*. There were no towns on that side of the lake, only farmhouses and hamlets.

Ver. 16. *give . . . eat*. Some think that what really happened was that, under the influence of Jesus, a generous impulse, beginning with the disciples, seized those who had provisions, and a general

17 give ye them to eat. And they say unto him, We have here  
 18 but five loaves, and two fishes. He said, Bring them hither  
 19 to me. And he commanded the multitude to sit down on  
 the grass, and took the five loaves, and the two fishes, and,  
 looking up to heaven, he blessed, and brake, and gave the  
 loaves to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude.  
 20 And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of  
 21 the fragments that remained twelve baskets full. And they  
 that had eaten were about five thousand men, beside women  
 and children.

distribution was made. The narrative itself does not make this quite impossible; but it was certainly not the view of Matt. vi. 52 nor of John vi. 14. If it had been the case, we should have had some hint of the people's generosity. The generous instinct of the disciples is, however, appealed to on the principle of Luke iii. 11.

Ver. 17. *five*. Might be an expression for a small number (cf. 1 Sam. xxi. 3). The fishes would be smoked or dried. The disciples would carry their supplies of provisions with them (cf. ver. 20). The small supply may indicate that only a very brief stay was contemplated, but probably they never carried much with them, on the principle of vi. 34. Mark vi. 37 implies possibly that they had two hundred denarii or so in the common purse.

Ver. 19. *sit down*—"recline," supporting the head on the elbows—the customary posture at a meal. *looking up to heaven*. The common Jewish attitude of prayer, with the eyes open. *blessed*. Like the head of a Jewish household, who was accustomed to give thanks before eating. Jesus here acts as the head of a family, who have all things in common—a socialistic ideal which appears also in the Early Church in Acts. *blessed, brake, gave*. Reminiscent of the Last Supper. This meal in the wilderness becomes a sacramental feast, as the Supper in the Early Church, celebrated at the close of the love-feast, which expressed the sense of common brotherhood, retained the character of a family feast.

Ver. 20. *fragments*. The lavishness of Jesus combined with the strictest economy is here revealed. *twelve baskets*. The travelling baskets for holding provisions which the Twelve carried with them. The Jew and his basket, carried to prevent his having to eat Gentile food, which defiled him, are the subject of the Roman poet Juvenal's satire.

#### XIV. 22-33. THE SECOND STORM—WALKING ON THE SEA.

22 And straightway Jesus constrained his disciples to get into a ship, and to go before him unto the other side, while he

Ver. 22. *constrained*—"compelled." John vi. 15 gives as the reason the people's attempt to force Jesus to be king in a political,

23 sent the multitudes away. And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and  
 24 when the evening was come, he was there alone. But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for  
 25 the wind was contrary. And in the fourth watch of the  
 26 night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea. And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled,  
 27 saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear. But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer:  
 28 it is I; be not afraid. And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water.  
 29 And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out

Messianic sense. The disciples were probably infected with the popular enthusiasm.

Ver. 23. *a mountain*. The high ground in contrast to the low-lying shore land. Instead of going after the disciples, upon the departure of the crowd, Jesus seeks solitude to pray. *evening*—i.e. the second evening after sunset (cf. n. on ver. 15).

Ver. 24. *now . . . sea*. Already far out on the sea, not necessarily in the very middle of the lake. *contrary*. Their course would have been from the desert land on the south towards Bethsaida (Mark vi. 45) on the north-east of the lake, where Jesus was to meet them. The wind would be blowing a gale from the north-east, driving them out from Bethsaida to sea.

Ver. 25. *the fourth watch*—i.e. from three to six o'clock, called the early morning. The twilight would be breaking. *went*. Jesus' intention would have been to go by land and pick up the disciples waiting for him at Bethsaida. His walking on the sea would be due to the peril of the disciples. To use His power for mere display is contrary to iv. 6, 7.

Ver. 26. *a spirit*. The figure dimly seen in the twilight appeared a phantom to the fishermen's superstition. *cried out*. The Unseen still has terror for the disciples.

Ver. 27. *spake*. The familiar voice would of itself calm them. *be not afraid*. Of their fear of a spirit, though the fear of the storm would be on them also.

Ver. 28. This incident is given only by Matthew. It is true to the impulsive nature of Peter. For Peter's tendency to imitate Christ cf. John xiii. 37. *Lord*. Here not=master or teacher, but in the later sense of the exalted Lord. Peter sees in Jesus' power to walk on the sea a revelation of His Divine glory, His supremacy over nature. *if it be thou*. Not expressing a doubt, but stating the conviction on which Peter bases his request. *bid me come*. The request of a child, without any reason in it: a simple desire to do as Jesus does. There is nothing to be gained by it.

Ver. 29. *Come*. Jesus humours Peter, as one does a child, partly to

30 of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus. But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and, beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me! And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt? And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased. Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God.

encourage a true instinct to imitate Him and believe in His power, partly because experience teaches a child. *walked . . . water.* All things are possible to him that believeth, provided Christ has said "Come"—God has called him.

Ver. 30. *saw the wind.* The wind was as strong when he was in the boat, but it was quite a different thing to see it when he was on the water, in peril. It is a trait of Peter to be bold beforehand but to lose his nerve when in danger. *beginning to sink.* Want of confidence is fatal to power. *Lord.* Cf. n. on ver. 28. *save me.* The child is taught his need and his limitations.

Ver. 31. *of little faith.* Here of faith in the call of Christ to come and the power behind it. Jesus was admiring his achievement, and is disappointed at the failure; but the rebuke is very gentle. *doubt.* To have two minds in the moment of action is Peter's weakness. He has to learn to be stable as a rock and carry out a bold enterprise boldly to a finish.

Ver. 32. *ceased.* Not till they were in the boat. Jesus first brought Peter through the storm. It can be done by His power.

Ver. 33. *they that were*=the disciples. *worshipped.* Cf. n. on ii. 11. *the Son of God.* Cf. n. on iii. 17. This confession is not in Mark's account of the incident, and appears in Matt. xvi. 16 as though it were then first made by Peter. This is either a momentary, not a reasoned conviction, or the later conviction has been worked into this story (cf. Appendix, Note D).

#### XIV. 34-36. THE RETURN TO GENNESARET.

34 And when they were gone over, they came into the land of  
35 Gennesaret. And when the men of that place had knowledge of him, they sent out into all that country round about,  
36 and brought unto him all that were diseased; and besought

Ver. 34. *into . . . Gennesaret.* Rather, "to the land into Gennesaret." Gennesaret was a plain, famed for its fertility and beauty, on the north-west of the lake, 1 mile broad and  $2\frac{1}{2}$  long.

Vers. 35, 36 are a condensed summary of Mark vi. 54-56. *had knowledge*—"recognised," implying that they had seen Him before,

him that they might only touch the hem of his garment : and as many as touched were made perfectly whole.

*sent out*—i.e. messengers. *the hem*. Cf. n. on ix. 20. Their faith in Jesus' healing power is now unlimited.

## XV. 1-14. DISPUTE OVER WASHING OF HANDS.

- 1 THEN came to Jesus scribes and Pharisees, which were of
- 2 Jerusalem, saying, Why do thy disciples transgress the tradi-
- 3 tion of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they
- 4 eat bread. But he answered and said unto them, Why do
- ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradi-
- tion? For God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and
- mother : and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die

Ver. 1. *Then*. While Jesus was in Gennesaret, attracting attention through the popular enthusiasm. *of Jerusalem*. In Mark vii. 1 only the scribes come from Jerusalem, the Pharisees are the local Pharisees.

Ver. 2. *transgress*. Of a moral transgression. *the tradition . . . elders*. The unwritten traditions of the written law, made from Ezra's day by the great successive Rabbis (=the elders) and handed down orally. These decisions were held to have the same moral authority as the written law itself. The scribes indeed declared that these injunctions were orally given to Moses by God, quoting Deut. iv. 14, vii. 11, and were handed down through the elders. The dominant schools of Hillel and Shammai in Jesus' time were particularly strict on hand-washing regulations. *wash not*. The omission not of ordinary cleanliness but of the prescribed rules for ceremonial purity. Mark vii. 2 speaks only of some of the disciples breaking the rules. Jesus no doubt left the disciples free on the matter. The scribes wish a clear declaration from Jesus on His attitude to the tradition. *eat bread*=take a meal. Matthew omits Mark's account of the Pharisaic practices, assuming these as known to his Jewish-Christian readers.

Ver. 3. Matthew has inverted Mark's order to make vers. 7-9 the climax and to lead up to it by proving their guilt by a specially striking example. There is a double antithesis: *Why do ye also transgress* to *Why do thy disciples transgress*, and *God said* (ver. 4) to *ye say* (ver. 5). To retort with another question is a common method of Jesus in argument (cf. xxi. 25, xxii. 20).

Ver. 4. *God commanded, saying*—"God said." Jesus quotes Ex. xx. 12, xxi. 17. *die the death*—"surely die." The example given is one that always impressed Jesus. All inhumanity, of which filial impiety is the extreme, is with Him a crowning sin (cf. xxv. 31-46). For Jesus' high view of the family compare also v. 32.

5 the death. But ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father or  
 6 his mother, It is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be  
 7 profited by me; and honour not his father or his mother, he  
 8 shall be free. Thus have ye made the commandment of God  
 9 of none effect by your tradition. Ye hypocrites, well did  
 10 Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh  
 11 unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips;  
 but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship  
 me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. And  
 he called the multitude, and said unto them, Hear, and  
 understand: not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a  
 man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth

Vers. 5, 6. The construction of the sentence is involved. The best translation is, "Whosoever shall say to his father or mother, a gift (is) whatever thou mightest be profited with by me, shall not honour his father or his mother." A man might dedicate all or part of his property to the temple by saying it is Corban (=a gift to the temple)—the legal formula. The scribes did not actually say "shall not honour," but they held that the vow was binding, and the effect was that the man was free from the obligation to support his parents by it. The scribes would say, God first, parents second. Christ would say, God first, and therefore parents first, the temple second. The interests of God and of humanity are not antagonistic but coincident, though God's interests are wider.

Ver. 7. *hypocrites*. Because they appear to be zealous to uphold God's law, while they are zealous only to uphold their own dogmas. *well*. Isaiah of course did not have them in view, but his words aptly describe them.

Ver. 8. Matthew follows Mark's citation, which reproduces the LXX with some freedom. *their heart*. The Pharisees were to a considerable extent unconscious hypocrites, but the heart of those who could sanction such inhumanity was certainly far from God. It is hard to believe that they were wholly unconscious that in this matter they were going against the fifth commandment, but still they were hide-bound logicians. A vow, they would say, must be kept at all costs. They would not consider whether the vow itself was moral.

Ver. 9. *in vain*. Not in Isaiah. To the Pharisees worship was a work which procured salvation. The irony was that it was profitless, because divorced from morality. *doctrines*—i.e. truths of God.

Ver. 10. *the multitude*. Who stood in the background and heard the dispute, and require to be clearly told the principle involved.

Ver. 11. To the Pharisees ceremonial uncleanness was spiritual defilement. Jesus goes behind the Levitical regulations to the root principle that the spirit cannot be defiled by matter, here food,

12 a man. Then came his disciples, and said unto him,  
 Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, after they  
 13 heard this saying? But he answered and said, Every plant,  
 which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted  
 14 up. Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind.  
 And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.

but only by what comes out of the spirit, words=the utterance of thoughts and desires and feelings.

Ver. 12. *Then*. In Mark vii. 17 this conversation with the disciples takes place in a house after leaving the people. *Knowest thou*. The disciples are astonished at the boldness of Christ and alarmed at the consequences. *this saying*—i.e. ver. 11. *offended* (cf. xi. 6). The offence was natural, as the principle of ver. 11 annulled the Levitical distinction of clean and unclean, and not merely the Pharisaic tradition added thereto.

Ver. 13. *plant*. Figuratively for doctrine. Every false idea is destined to be destroyed.

Ver. 14. *Let them alone*—i.e. pay no regard to them. *Omit of the blind*, though the people are in the following sentence compared to the blind. If blind leaders lead a blind people, common ruin is inevitable.

## XV. 15-20. RITUALISM *VERSUS* CHARACTER.

15 Then answered Peter and said unto him, Declare unto us  
 16 this parable. And Jesus said, Are ye also yet without under-  
 17 standing? Do not ye yet understand, that whatsoever  
 entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out  
 18 into the draught? But those things which proceed out of  
 the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the  
 19 man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders,  
 adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies:  
 20 these are the things which defile a man: but to eat with  
 unwashen hands defileth not a man.

Ver. 15. *Peter*. The spokesman as usual. Even in the time of Gal. ii. Peter has not thoroughly grasped the principle that ethical defilement is the only impurity (cf. v. 21-48). *parable*—i.e. ver. 11, which has really lost its parabolic character and become a plain statement by Matthew's change of Mark's "out of a man" into "out of the mouth."

Ver. 17. *yet*. After all My teaching.

Vers. 18, 19. Words, as expressing thoughts and desires, the seat of both being the heart, defile *the man*—who is a spirit. All ritualism, when it becomes more than symbolism and is held to have an efficacy in itself, is based on a materialistic view of man's nature.



# XV. 21-XVIII. THE LATER MINISTRY IN AND AROUND GALILEE.

## XV. 21-28. THE WOMAN OF CÆSAREA.

21 Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of  
 22 Tyre and Sidon. And, behold, a woman of Canaan came  
 out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have  
 mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David; my daughter is  
 23 grievously vexed with a devil. But he answered her not a  
 word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying,  
 24 Send her away; for she crieth after us. But he answered  
 and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house  
 25 of Israel. Then came she and worshipped him, saying,  
 26 Lord, help me! But he answered and said, It is not meet

Ver. 21. *thence*. In Mark, from the house He had entered into, here indefinite. *departed*. To escape from the Pharisees to a place of safety and peace. A conflict was inevitable, but He would choose His own time. *into the coasts*—"regions," which stretched from the coast inland towards Galilee. *Into* does not seem to mean more than "to" or at most "up to" (cf. next verse and xvi. 13).

Ver. 22. *a woman of Canaan*—i.e. a Phœnician. The Phœnicians were descendants of the Canaanites, the original inhabitants of Palestine. *out of . . . coasts*—"out from those boundaries." Jesus had not, therefore, according to Matthew, crossed the boundary into heathen territory. *me*. "The mother makes her daughter's misery her own" (Bengel). The fame of the Healer, especially His power over demons, had crossed the border. She addresses Him as the Jewish Messiah, "son of David." "Lord" will be here an expression of homage to the King Messiah. So in vers. 25, 27.

Ver. 23. *Send her away*. By granting her request. *crieth*. She continued following them, crying loudly. The annoyance would lie not merely in the scene she was creating but in the attraction of the crowd she would cause, breaking in on the privacy they were seeking (cf. Mark vii. 24).

Ver. 24. Jesus' refusal was not due to heartlessness nor unwillingness to help, but to the limits set to His personal mission in the days of His flesh. He had to confine Himself to Israel, whose hope He had come to fulfil. *lost sheep*. Cf. notes on ix. 36, x. 6.

Ver. 25. She overtakes them and prostrates herself before Him (cf. n. on ii. 11).

Ver. 26. The blessings He brings belong to the children (=the Jews) by right. The dogs (=the Gentiles) are house-dogs, pets, which somewhat softens the harshness. The apparent harshness may be due to His sense of the prescribed limits of His vocation. He

27 to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs. And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which  
 28 fall from their masters' table. Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.

certainly could not, with the time at His disposal, have devoted Himself to the heathen without neglecting the Jews.

Ver. 27. *yet*—"for even." She heartily assents to His principle, and then cleverly makes it a reason for granting her request. "Yea, Lord, and therefore you will help, for even the dogs get, not the children's bread, but the crumbs."

Ver. 28. *faith*—*i.e.* confidence in Jesus. Her humility is as conspicuous as her confidence. She only asks a crumb, but "faith early learns humility." Jesus makes an exception and breaks through His rule. Yet it is only the exception which proves the rule.

#### XV. 29-31. RETURN TO THE SEA OF GALILEE.

29 And Jesus departed from thence, and came nigh unto the sea of Galilee; and went up into a mountain, and sat down  
 30 there. And great multitudes came unto him, having with them those that were lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and cast them down at Jesus' feet; and he healed  
 31 them: insomuch that the multitude wondered, when they saw the dumb to speak, the maimed to be whole, the lame to walk, and the blind to see: and they glorified the God of Israel.

Ver. 29. Mark vii. 31 makes Jesus take a long journey from the borders of Tyre through Sidon and down to the east of the lake, but the text may be corrupt. Matthew, who does not regard Jesus as having crossed the frontier (cf. n. on ver. 22), seems to bring Him straight down to the west of the lake. *a mountain*—*i.e.* the high, hilly ground. *sat down*—*i.e.* to teach (cf. v. 1).

Ver. 30. A general description of a healing ministry. *cast them down*. Either in careless confidence, or more probably in haste.

Ver. 31. *the God of Israel*. This unusual name is probably due to vers. 24, 26. The children are favoured without stint.

#### XV. 32-39. THE FEEDING OF THE FOUR THOUSAND.

32 Then Jesus called his disciples unto him, and said, I have compassion on the multitude, because they continue with me

Ver. 32. *I will not*. In the case of the first feeding, Jesus' compassion was awakened by the sight of the sick, and the disciples

now three days, and have nothing to eat : and I will not send  
 33 them away fasting, lest they faint in the way. And his dis-  
 ciples say unto him, Whence should we have so much bread  
 34 in the wilderness as to fill so great a multitude? And  
 Jesus saith unto them, How many loaves have ye? And  
 35 they said, Seven, and a few little fishes. And he commanded  
 36 the multitude to sit down on the ground. And he took the  
 seven loaves and the fishes, and gave thanks, and brake  
 them, and gave to his disciples, and the disciples to the  
 37 multitude. And they did all eat, and were filled : and they  
 took up of the broken meat that was left seven baskets full.  
 38 And they that did eat were four thousand men, beside  
 39 women and children. And he sent away the multitude, and  
 took ship, and came into the coasts of Magdala.

call attention to the people's need for food. Here His compassion is due to their want of food, and Jesus Himself takes the initiative.

Vers. 33-38. The question of the disciples seems strange after their experience of the first feeding, and many therefore naturally regard this miracle as a duplicate of the first (cf. notes on xiv. 19-21). The baskets are not the same kind of baskets as those mentioned in the first feeding. They were probably larger.

Ver. 39. *coasts of Magdala*. Read "Magadan." Mark has "the parts of Dalmanutha." Both places are unknown. Magadan may have been a village near Dalmanutha, or possibly the two words are a corruption of the one original name. Some think of Delhemiyeh, on the south of the lake. Cheyne suggests Migdal-nunia, a suburb of Tiberias, which was on the west of the lake. Others think of El-Mejdel, also on the west of the lake, in the Plain of Gennesaret.

#### XVI. 1-4. REQUEST FOR A SIGN FROM HEAVEN.

1 THE Pharisees also with the Sadducees came, and tempting desired him that he would show them a sign from heaven.

Ver. 1. *the Sadducees*. The governing priestly class (cf. Appendix, Note A). The Pharisees and Sadducees, usually antagonists, now unite in opposition to Jesus. Their presence here points to the west of the Lake as the scene of this request. *tempting*. The request was in itself a temptation, because Jesus would have transgressed the limits of His vocation if He had given such a sign. They may not have thought of that, but the word implies that their motive at least was insincere. *a sign . . . heaven*. Some physical, startling phenomenon, which would conclusively prove that Jesus was the Messiah, requiring no spiritual insight, and obviating any need for moral decision.

- 2 He answered and said unto them, When it is evening, ye say,  
 3 It will be fair weather; for the sky is red: and in the morning, It will be foul weather to-day; for the sky is red and lowering. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the  
 4 sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times? A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas. And he left them, and departed.

Vers. 2, 3 omitted in the best MSS. A genuine saying of Jesus, similar to Luke xii. 54-56, spoken probably on some other occasion. *hypocrites*. Omitted in good MSS. If retained, it implies that their spiritual obtuseness was due to their insincerity. *the signs of the times*. The present time is meant. The plural simply puts the question in the form of a general statement. The signs are the Messianic signs, the movements such as the preaching and healing ministry of Jesus (cf. xi. 4, 5), which foreshadow the coming of the Messianic kingdom. But the expression is general and will include all that points to a coming judgment and calls for repentance in time.

Ver. 4. *the sign . . . Jonas*. Cf. notes on xii. 39, 40. *departed*. The movements of Jesus are not clear. According to Mark, He came from the north to the east of the lake, then to Dalmanutha on the west, or more probably the south, and recrossed to the east or north, His disciples being with Him all the time, and the conversation on the Leaven taking place in the boat. According to Matthew, He came down from the north to the west of the lake probably, went farther south by sea to Magadan, and from there crossed to the west or north, going in advance of His disciples.

#### XVI. 5-12. THE LEAVEN OF THE PHARISEES AND SADDUCEES.

- 5 And when his disciples were come to the other side, they  
 6 had forgotten to take bread. Then Jesus said unto them,  
 Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and  
 7 of the Sadducees. And they reasoned among themselves,

Ver. 5. *forgotten*. In their haste. Jesus' departure was abrupt. They would only take provisions with them if they were going to an unfrequented region.

Ver. 6. *Then*. This must have been after they had landed on the other side.

Ver. 7. *among themselves*. Rather, "in themselves," *i.e.* in their minds. It is not likely that they discussed the matter orally. *no bread*. They are awakened by the word leaven, which was used in baking bread, to their forgetfulness to provide themselves with bread, and think that Jesus is warning them against buying loaves from His enemies, in fear, some imagine, of their being poisoned,

8 saying, It is because we have taken no bread. Which when  
 Jesus perceived, he said unto them, O ye of little faith, why  
 reason ye among yourselves, because ye have brought no  
 9 bread? Do ye not yet understand, neither remember the  
 five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets ye  
 10 took up? Neither the seven loaves of the four thousand,  
 11 and how many baskets ye took up? How is it that ye do  
 not understand that I spake it not to you concerning bread,  
 that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the  
 12 Sadducees? Then understood they how that he bade them  
 not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the  
 Pharisees and of the Sadducees.

Ver. 8. *of little faith*—in Jesus' ability and willingness to provide for their physical needs. *because*—*i.e.* "saying it is because."

Ver. 12. *doctrine*—"teaching." The disciples did not even yet thoroughly understand Jesus. From Mark viii. 15 the spirit of antagonism to Himself must be meant. Matthew substitutes the Sadducees for Herod because he makes leaven = teaching, and Herod was no teacher. But leaven rather symbolises the insidiously corrupting influence of a spirit of antagonism to truth and righteousness, which Jesus stood for and embodied. With the Pharisees it was the spirit of traditionalism and conceit, with the Sadducees the spirit of secularism.

## XVI. 13-20. THE REVELATION OF JESUS' MESSIAHSHIP.

13 When Jesus came into the coasts of Cæsarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son

Ver. 13. *into the coasts*. In the neighbourhood, perhaps within sight of the city (cf. xv. 21). *Cæsarea Philippi* lay just over the frontier at the foot of the spurs of Mount Hermon, amid exceptionally beautiful scenery. It was originally called Paneas, from a cave dedicated to the god Pan, in the side of the cliff, whence issued one of the streams of the Jordan. Close by the cave Herod the Great had built a temple to Cæsar Augustus. It was a very suggestive scene for the declaration of the new faith of humanity—the spiritual and human over against the Nature-worship which was the basis of Paganism. Herod Philip, in whose tetrarchy it lay, enlarged and beautified the town and called it Cæsarea. It was known as Cæsarea of Philip, to distinguish it from the Cæsarea Palestina of his father, Herod the Great, on the seacoast.

*that I the Son of man am*. The best MSS omit "I." For Mark's "I," which Luke follows, Matthew has "the Son of man," but compare ver. 15. According to Matthew's expression here, the disciples knew that Jesus called Himself the Son of Man. It was indeed His favourite name for Himself, but the phrase could not

14 of man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John  
the Baptist; some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of  
15 the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I  
16 am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the  
17 Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered  
and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for

have been, in Matthew's view or in fact, a popular designation for the Messiah (cf. Appendix, Note C).

Ver. 14. The popular opinion does not hold Jesus the Messiah, but one of the illustrious dead. For Elijah redivivus as forerunner of the Messiah compare Mal. iv. 5; Matt. xi. 14. *Jeremias*. Due perhaps to 2 Mac. ii. 5-8, xv. 13-16. The note of strenuous righteousness in Jesus suggests the Baptist and Elijah; the note of love and compassion, Jeremias. Others feel he is a prophet, but cannot identify Him.

Ver. 16. Peter, as usual, answers for the Twelve. *the Christ*, i.e. the Messiah. *the Son of the living God*. Not in a metaphysical sense, but simply another way of expressing the Messiah, perhaps inserted as an antithesis to the Son of man in ver. 13, or *vice versa*. This addition is confined to Matthew. It might be held that Matthew has added to the confession of Jesus' Messiahship in Mark a confession of His Divinity (the later apostolic view), were that not excluded by the use of the phrase in xxvi. 63. *living*, in contrast to other gods who were dead, i.e. non-existent (cf. 1 Thess. i. 9). Already Matthew (xiv. 33) records a confession of Jesus' Messiahship, but this is a decided conviction, arising after personal acquaintance with Jesus, who, at first sight, appeared anything but what the disciples expected the Messiah to be.

Ver. 17. *Blessed*. More exalted than happy—a rare degree of bliss. *Simon Bar-jona*. Aramaic for "son of Jonah or John." The full name is due to Jesus' exalted mood and to the solemnity of the occasion. *flesh and blood*. The human as contrasted with the Divine. The distinction is between a purely spiritual perception seen by direct intuition and an opinion resting upon the authority of others or due to an impression on one's senses, or to mere dialectical reasoning (cf. Gal. i. 16; John i. 13). Peter's faith springs up after a certain measure of disillusionment. The traditional conception—sensual, worldly, political—of the Messiah formed in the Rabbinic schools by deductions based on O.T. passages is "the flesh and blood" view. In place of it, the spiritual reality, which Jesus, the actual Messiah, is, has been revealed to Peter. Glimpses of this spiritual reality Peter had before this confession, and despite his present confession he did not get clean away from the old view till after the Resurrection. Disillusionment, the gateway of the higher knowledge, is still awaiting Peter. But from this moment he holds the secret. He has adopted the right attitude to Jesus. He holds Him to be the King, requiring absolute obedience, however much he has yet

flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father  
18 which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art

Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the  
19 gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give

to learn about Him. *my Father*. "My" indicates a special spiritual relationship to God. *in heaven*=the Transcendent One. The spiritual transcendence of Jesus can only be seen by one who is open to the light of the Transcendent. The relations of the Father and the Son to each other lie in the region of the transcendent, the spiritual, and interpret each other (cf. xi. 27).

Ver. 18. *Peter . . . rock*. A play on Simon's new name. Peter =rock. The promise is undoubtedly made to Peter personally, but it is to Peter as expressing his perception of the truth about Jesus, revealed by God to him. It is equally applicable to any other who has the same insight and is true to the same conviction (cf. xviii. 18). Besides, Peter is, as usual, the spokesman of the Twelve, though he was the first to utter the conviction emphatically. The rock is the revealed truth about Jesus, but that truth personally seen and held as a personal conviction. *I will build* definitely asserts that Jesus is the Architect, and suggests the continued activity of the Living Christ in carrying out His design. For the Church as a building of living stones, *i.e.* souls, cf. Eph. ii. 20; 1. Pet. ii. 5. *my church*. The word church, found in the Gospels only here and in xviii. 17, may be due to the evangelist writing at a later time. But it was already used in the LXX for the Hebrew word denoting the congregation of the people of God, *i.e.* Israel. Jesus would have used an Aramaic word signifying "My society," the society of those who believe in Me as the Messiah. It is more in harmony with Jesus' whole teaching and attitude to think that a new society, ruled in all its life by His spirit, was before His mind, rather than the Church as a religious association. But the Church is the continuation of the association of the Twelve, who were expressly formed by Jesus to be the organ through which His influence should work on the world. Though His thoughts may have reached further, He must have thought of the permanence of such an association, and it was the first thing the apostles saw to after the Resurrection. *the gates of hell*—*i.e.* Hades, the unseen world of the dead, pictured as a fortress with gates (cf. Isa. xxxviii. 10; Job xvii. 16). *prevail against it*. Better, "shall not surpass it in strength." Nothing was conceived to be stronger than the gates of Hades, through which nothing that passed could ever return. If the translation in the text be kept, the powers of evil issuing through the gates, or better (since Hades is the abode of the dead rather than of evil spirits) the powers of death and destruction, shall not overcome it and make it pass through the gates of Hades. On either view, the thought is that the Church is deathless and indestructible.

Ver. 19. *the keys of the kingdom*. The kingdom, the spiritual realm of the rule of God, is here distinguished from the Church, the

unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven : and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven ; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in  
 20 heaven. Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ.

society of men who believe in the Messiahship of Jesus. The keys are the symbol of power. In Rev. iii. 7 the power of the key is the power of opening and shutting (cf. also Matt. xxiii. 13 ; Isa. xxii. 22 ; Luke xi. 52, etc.). But the keys here are the keys of the house-steward, to whom the power over all the house has been delegated by the Master of the house, rather than simply the keys of the porter, who has only power to open and shut the gates. Insight into Christ is the key to the truths of the kingdom, and each new enlightening experience of Christ is another key to a new truth, to another region of the kingdom. The natural meaning is therefore that, in virtue of Peter's insight into the crucial secret of Christ (ver. 18), he is given the power of opening to men the mysteries of the kingdom. He is made a steward of the mysteries of God (cf. 1 Cor. iv. 1). The power of the keys is defined by *whatsoever* . . . *heaven*. "Binding" and "loosing" were Rabbinic legal terms for "forbidding" and "allowing." Thou shalt not do this=binding on the law. Thou mayest do this=loosing from the law. *in heaven*=before God, *i.e.* permanently, eternally valid. The power here given is not the power to "allow" or "forbid" a soul entrance into the kingdom, but the power to declare what is truth and what is not truth ; but it applies to truth in conduct and practice as well as to truth in thought. Even so it is only in virtue of Peter's insight that the power is given, and only in so far as he has the illumination of the Spirit, that this promise can be realised. It is as valid for any other who has the insight as for Peter. It is extended to all disciples in xviii. 18.

Ver. 20. *charged*. After such a promise the disciples would naturally be in an exultant mood, not easily restrained. *tell no man*—Jesus' consistent policy, to avoid exciting in the people the political-worldly expectations which they associated with the Messiah, and because the disciples themselves did not yet know properly what kind of Messiah He was. The injunction is of course only temporary, due to expediency (cf. x. 26). *Jesus*. Omitted in the best MSS.

## XVI. 21-28. PREDICTION OF HIS PASSION.

21 From that time forth began Jesus to show unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed,

Ver. 21. *From . . . forth*. Matthew's way of marking a new epoch in the life of Jesus (cf. iv. 17). From this time Jesus devotes Himself chiefly to teaching His disciples and preparing them for the



22 and be raised again the third day. Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee,  
 23 Lord: this shall not be unto thee. But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me; for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.

crisis. After the revelation of vers. 16-19 they should now be able to bear the explicit intimation of His Passion. Hints of it had already been given (cf. ix. 15). *must*. The inherent necessity of the Divine purpose. *elders . . . scribes*=the Sanhedrin. *raised*. Death is not to be the end of Christ's activity. *the third day*. Mark has "after three days." So also Matt. xii. 40, xxvii. 63. This may be the original form of the prediction, and may signify "after a very short time" (cf. Hos. vi. 2). The change to "on the third day" may be due to the influence of the actual event. They might, however, be simply different modes of reckoning, the day of the Crucifixion, Friday, and the day of the Resurrection, Sunday, being both included, according to a common ancient method of computation. But it is difficult to believe that the disciples could have failed to look for the Resurrection if they had been given a definite date for it. Their attitude would be more naturally accounted for if the prediction had been in the form of a general statement. Cf. n. on xii. 40.

Ver. 22. *took*—*i.e.* by the hand. *rebuke*. An admonition prompted by love. Peter perceived that Jesus was the Messiah, but the idea of a suffering Messiah horrified him. *Be . . . thee*—lit. "God be merciful to thee!" *i.e.* God avert it! *Lord*. Here probably in the exalted sense, as Jesus is more than a Rabbi now—the Messiah. *shall not be*. Practically="cannot be," with a protest against such a fate. Impossible! Peter is carried away by his passionate love.

Ver. 23. *turned*. Might be expressive of moral aversion, but more probably it is taken from Mark viii. 33, where Jesus turned and looked on the other disciples, to make the rebuke a public warning to them all. *Get . . . Satan*. The Tempter (cf. iv. 10) reappears under the guise of a loving friend—the severest form of temptation. Jesus' passionate and immediate rejection of it indicates the strength and reality of the temptation. *an offence*—"a stumbling-block." The Rock (ver. 18) is now a rock of offence (cf. Isa. viii. 14), a rock in the straight path on which one may stumble and be thrown out of the way. *savourest . . . God*—lit. "thinkest"="sidest not with God." *the things . . . God*=God's purpose that Jesus should sacrifice Himself. *those . . . men*. Human conceptions and instincts, here the instinct of self-preservation.

## XVI. 24-28. THE WAY OF THE CROSS.

- 24 Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and  
 25 follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and  
 26 whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for  
 27 his soul? For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man  
 28 according to his works. Verily I say unto you, There be

Ver. 24. *will come*—"wishes to come." *deny himself*—i.e. refuse to follow the impulses of self—the negative side. *take up*—i.e. to carry it—the positive side. Voluntary submission to anything in the path of duty which is painful to self (see n. on x. 38).

The Jews did not themselves practise crucifixion, but since the Romans had familiarised them with it, the cross had become the type of the most violent suffering and death. The carrying of the cross to the place of crucifixion was in itself more a symbol of shameful degradation than an infliction of pain. *follow me* (cf. n. on x. 38). To walk in His steps means to walk in the way of the Cross.

Ver. 25. Cf. n. on x. 39. The point of the antithesis is that life is what every one seeks, but the only real life for man is the higher life, and he who has sacrificed the higher for the lower has missed the very end he sought. *find*. Life is found or saved by being in the kingdom.

Ver. 26. *soul*. Better, "life." So in the following clause. *lose*. More exactly "forfeit," the price paid for gaining the world. *in exchange for*. Like the ransom paid to free a slave. There is no equivalent in value which a man can give to redeem his forfeited life, here the higher eternal life, soul-life (cf. Ps. xlix. 7, 8).

Ver. 27. *For*. The impending judgment is the final argument, at once a warning and a stimulus. *Son of man*. Cf. Appendix, Note C. *shall*—"is about to come," expressing the nearness of the Advent of the Messiah to judge the world and finally apportion human destinies—the prevalent Messianic expectation. *his angels*. Which are assigned to the Son of Man to carry out His decisions. *and . . . works*. Inserted by Matthew from Ps. lxii. 12 in place of the clause in Mark viii. 38, to which he has already given a parallel in x. 33. *works*—"work." The reward is in proportion to the moral value of his life-work as a whole, here estimated according to his self-denying faithfulness to Christ.

Ver. 28. An encouraging promise. In Mark ix. 1 the promise is that the kingdom of God would come in power within the lifetime of some of those then living, which did happen. Matthew interprets his of the personal Coming of the Messiah at the final establishment

some standing here which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.

of the kingdom. How far sayings on His Second Advent ascribed to Christ may have been influenced by the primitive Christian belief in its proximity is uncertain. But parables like the Mustard Seed and the Leaven seem to anticipate a prolonged history. Yet early and late are terms relative to the seer ; compare their use by geologists. To the prophetic vision what was far off always appeared as at the door (cf. 2 Pet. iii. 8).

## XVII. 1-8. THE TRANSFIGURATION.

- 1 AND after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart,
- 2 and was transfigured before them ; and his face did shine as
- 3 the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking

Ver. 1. *six days*—*i.e.* after the confession at Cæsarea Philippi. *Peter . . . John.* His three most intimate and sympathetic disciples (cf. xxvi. 37). They were taken, not to see the Transfiguration, but rather, as in Gethsemane, from His craving for human fellowship and sympathy.

*mountain.* Traditionally Mount Tabor, in the south of Galilee, but more probably one of the heights of snow-clad Mount Hermon, near which Cæsarea Philippi lay.

Ver. 2. *transfigured.* The object of the ascent, we may suppose, was devotional. So Luke ix. 29 makes the Transfiguration take place during prayer. That His thoughts were on His impending Passion is definitely stated in Luke ix. 31, and can be inferred from Matt. xvi. 21-28, which shows Jesus in a highly exalted mood. In Gethsemane we see His soul wrestling into submission to the will of God against temptation ; this is rather an hour when He consecrates Himself to God's will with perfect, joyous self-abandon, after the victory of xvi. 23.

So far as we can conceive the occurrence, it may be compared with the light on Moses' face (Ex. xxxiv. 29-35 ; 2 Cor. iii. 7), and still better with the light on the martyr's face, a light shining out from within the soul (cf. Acts vi. 15). In the transfiguring light of the passion of love's sacrifice, the consciousness of self being for the time lost, the hidden Divinity stands confessed.

*before them*—*i.e.* in their presence. According to Luke, the disciples were asleep when it happened. It would be night—Jesus' favourite time for prayer on a mountain—but they saw the change when they awoke.

Ver. 3. *appeared* need not mean more than a vision (cf. ver. 9). *Moses*, the representative of the Law ; *Elijah*, of Prophecy—the two

4 with him. Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one  
5 for Elias. While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased;  
6 hear ye him. And when the disciples heard it, they fell on  
7 their face, and were sore afraid. And Jesus came and touched  
8 them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid. And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only.

sides of the old dispensation which Christ came to fulfil. One may ask how the disciples could have recognised them. Jesus' preceding conversation may have directed their thoughts to these two dominating figures of the past. Possibly Jesus brought their minds into such sympathy with His that they saw what He saw in vision.

Ver. 4. *it . . . here.* Usually taken as meaning, "it is pleasant and profitable for us to be here," but better, "it is good that we disciples are here," viz. to serve you by making three tents (booths, composed of branches and foliage). The absurdity of the idea is well ascribed (Mark ix. 6) to a distracted mind, the thought breaking from Peter (Luke ix. 33), as the visitors depart, in hope of prolonging their stay. What impelled Peter was probably a desperate desire to clutch at a way of escape from the Cross.

Ver. 5. *bright—i.e.* luminous. A cloud was the standing O.T. symbol of the Divine Presence (cf. Ex. xxxiii. 9, 10). *them—i.e.* Moses and Elijah, and possibly Jesus. *This . . . pleased.* The meaning is the same as in iii. 17 (compare notes on that passage). The attestation is to be traced to Jesus' devotion of Himself to His Cross. *hear ye him.* Added in view of the disciples' consternation at the thought of a Crucified Messiah.

Vers. 6, 7. Fear is the first effect of a sudden vivid realisation of the Divine Presence, by sight or hearing (cf. Isa. vi. 5; Dan. viii. 17; Rev. i. 17). *touched.* The physical touch, familiar and kindly, imparting confidence in presence of the spirit world, like the voice in xiv. 27.

## XVII. 9-13. CONVERSATION ON THE DESCENT.

9 And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of

Ver. 9. *vision.* It may have been a vision in the mind, though the word does not imply that there was nothing objective. *Son of man.* Cf. Appendix, Note C. *risen again.* This makes the Transfigured Christ an anticipation of the Glorified Christ, and the whole scene a prophecy of His victory over death. The Resurrection alone could explain the vision. But the reason for secrecy is not merely the

10 man be risen again from the dead. And his disciples asked him, saying, Why then say the scribes that Elias must first  
 11 come? And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly  
 12 shall first come, and restore all things. But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall  
 13 also the Son of man suffer of them. Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist.

impossibility of understanding the vision before the Resurrection, but the danger of misunderstanding. It would raise the false Messianic expectations. They must know what Jesus really is before it would be safe to tell the people what would attest His Messiahship. Further, Jesus is bent on death now, and nothing must be done to raise a Messianic movement to interfere with His destined path to the Cross.

Ver. 10. This question may be variously understood: (1) Why has Elijah come (*i.e.* on the Mount) after, and not before, the coming of the Messiah? (2) If Elijah has disappeared so soon, why do the scribes attach such importance to his coming? (3) If Elijah prepares the way for the Messiah, why must the Messiah die, as though things were not ready for Him? We can hardly decide between these from the context. Perhaps more than one thought led them to feel that the event was in contradiction to the scribal teaching. Jesus' answer covers the three views.

Ver. 11. *shall . . . come*—"comes." A general statement of the truth. The scribes are right in their teaching. *restore*—"shall restore." The future here is due to a reminiscence of Mal. iv. 6. The restoration of all things means the restoration of all true moral relations which have been destroyed by sin, *i.e.* their restoration through repentance.

Ver. 12. *knew . . . not*. Did not recognise him as the promised Elijah, the recognition both of insight and of obedience. *have done*. Herod's was the hand which murdered John, but the spirit of the generation was the ultimate cause. *they listed*. Following their own will instead of obeying John and repenting. *Likewise*. By their refusal to repent, they prevented the restoration of all things, and John's fate becomes a prophecy of a Crucified Messiah (=the Son of Man).

Ver. 13. The prophecy was fulfilled not in the visionary Elijah on the Mount, but in John.

#### XVII. 14-21. THE EPILEPTIC BOY.

14 And when they were come to the multitude, there came to  
 15 him a certain man, kneeling down to him, and saying, Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is lunatic, and sore vexed:

Ver. 14. *multitude*. Their presence is obscurely accounted for in Mark ix. 14-16, most of which Matthew omits.

Vers. 15, 16. *lunatic*—"moonstruck." The symptoms are those of

for oftentimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water.  
 16 And I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure  
 17 him. Then Jesus answered and said, O faithless and per-  
 verse generation, how long shall I be with you! how long  
 18 shall I suffer you! Bring him hither to me. And Jesus  
 rebuked the devil; and he departed out of him: and the  
 19 child was cured from that very hour. Then came the  
 disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast  
 20 him out? And Jesus said unto them, Because of your  
 unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a  
 grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain,  
 Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and

epilepsy. Its attacks were supposed to be influenced by the phases of the moon. *thy disciples.* The nine left behind.

Ver. 17. It is not so clear whether Jesus is thinking of the inability to cure physical misery or to endure it patiently. The former may be inferred from ver. 20, but the latter would be more in harmony with His spirit of confidence in God though called upon to suffer (vers. 1-12), and with His joy of sacrifice. Both might be in His mind, as the spirit of unbelief and moral perversity are destructive both of the power to suffer and the power to help. Such an outburst at their want of power seems strange, but the sudden contact with this prevailing ("generation") spirit after His exalted mood on the Mount would account for it. *how long.* Impatience without any thought of desertion, the weariness of an uncongenial society. *with you*—"in your midst." *suffer you.* It is a trial to His sensitive spirit, so strung up by His experience on the Mount, to endure the pressure of their unspiritual perverse spirit. He is eager to die and so be done with it. So human is Jesus, so severe was the trial, as all prophetic souls feel it. The outburst, however, is quickly over. He maintains His self-command. *Bring him.* Imperious command, addressed to those about the boy. He asserts His power energetically against the prevalent depressing spirit, and conquers His impatience in the presence of human need.

Ver. 18. *the devil.* The first hint in Matthew's account that it was a case of demoniacal possession. Epilepsy would very naturally suggest possession by another will.

Ver. 19. The disciples had been endowed with the power to cast out demons (x. 1), and had been successful (Luke x. 20). Hence this question of failure.

Ver. 20. *unbelief.* Better, "your little faith," i.e. confidence in the power given them by Christ (x. 1), and in God behind their power. *mustard seed.* Proverbial for its smallness (cf. xiii. 32). The expression hardly implies that the disciples had not even a grain of faith, but rather emphasises the power of even the smallest faith. *this mountain*—pointing to the Mount of Transfiguration. To remove

21 nothing shall be impossible unto you. Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.

mountains was a proverbial expression for overcoming what looked an impossible task (cf. 1 Cor. xiii. 2). A Rabbi who could explain hard passages was called "a remover of mountains." *impossible*. Faith is the power of the impossible, *i.e.*, of course, of what seems to us impossible. There are necessarily limits to its power.

Ver. 21. *This kind*—*i.e.* this hard, demoniacal type. Faith is the power which casts out demons, but *prayer and fasting*, communion with God and self-discipline, are the means whereby the faith is made strong enough to do it. By the authority of the best MSS, however, this verse is an interpolation from Mark ix. 29.

## XVII. 22, 23. SECOND ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE PASSION.

22 And while they abode in Galilee, Jesus said unto them, The  
23 Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of men; and they shall kill him, and the third day he shall be raised again. And they were exceeding sorry.

Vers. 22, 23. *abode*—"moved about." *Son of man*. Cf. Appendix, Note C. *betrayed*—"delivered." It may allude to Judas' treachery, but the expression hardly suggests it. It is the destiny of the Son of Man to be delivered into the hands—*i.e.* the power—of men, that His vocation may be fulfilled. *the third day*. Cf. n. on xvi. 21.

## XVII. 24-27. THE TEMPLE TAX.

24 And when they were come to Capernaum, they that received  
tribute money came to Peter, and said, Doth not your  
25 master pay tribute? He saith, Yes. And when he was come into the house, Jesus prevented him, saying, What thinkest thou, Simon? of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own children, or of

Ver. 24. *Capernaum*. Back to His home from His wanderings. *tribute money*—"the half-shekel" (=about sixteen pence) paid annually on the 15th of Adar (March) to the temple by every Jew of twenty years of age and upward. *Peter*. Even the tax-collectors look on Peter as the leader of the circle. *master*—"Teacher," "Rabbi." Evidently Jesus had not yet paid the tax, which was probably overdue.

Ver. 25. *Yes*. Peter either had seen Jesus pay the tax before, or argued from Jesus' general habit of loyally honouring existing institutions. *the house*. Jesus' (=Peter's) house (cf. ix. 10). *prevented*. Old

26 strangers? Peter saith unto him, Of strangers. Jesus saith  
 27 unto him, Then are the children free. Notwithstanding,  
 lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast an  
 hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when  
 thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of  
 money: that take, and give unto them for me and thee.

English for *anticipated*. Jesus addressed Peter before he had time to report the interview between him and the tax-collectors which Jesus had observed. *custom*. Taxes on goods. *tribute*. The capitation tax on persons according to the valuation of their personal property. *their own children* (sons) *or strangers*. The contrast is between the members of the Royal Family, who were exempt from taxation, and the ordinary subjects. Others, with less probability, say members of the race—"the king's house"—"the nation" in Oriental thought—and foreigners.

Ver. 26. *are . . . free*. God is the King. The tax paid into the temple treasury was paid to God. Jesus, as the Son of God, and His disciples, as also sons of God, are exempt from paying tribute to the King, their Heavenly Father. The old community of Israel was composed of servants of God; the new Messianic community is made up of sons of God.

Ver. 27. *offend* (cf. n. on xi. 6). Jesus wished to avoid any disparagement of the temple, which would seem a dishonouring of God, and cause misunderstanding. *hook*. Not a net, because only one fish was wanted. *a piece of money*—"a stater," a coin equal to four drachmæ—sufficient to pay the tax for two, the half-shekel being equal to two drachmæ. *for me and thee*. Why Peter's tax is paid in this way, and not the other disciples' taxes, does not appear. Perhaps the fact that Jesus was using Peter's house may account for it.

This story is recorded only by Matthew. His interest in it lay not in its miraculous character, but in the attitude of Jesus towards existing institutions, as a guide for Christians in similar circumstances. Various attempts have been made to explain its strange miraculousness. The best explanation is that it was originally a proverbial utterance, or simply that Peter was to catch fish and sell them to pay the tax, and that in the course of tradition it acquired its miraculous colouring. Cf. the German proverb, "The morning hour brings gold in its mouth."

#### XVIII. 1-4. JESUS ON PERSONAL AMBITION.

1 AT the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who

Ver. 1. *At the same time*—"in that hour," connecting the origin of the following question with the tax-collectors' treating Peter as the leader of the circle. Mark ix. 33, 34 speaks of a dispute among



- 2 is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, 3 and said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom 4 of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

the disciples as to which of them was the greatest. Whatever gave rise to it, it is a question of personal ambition.

*kingdom of heaven.* Cf. n. on iii. 2, and Appendix, Note B.

Ver. 3. *be converted*—"turn," *i.e.* from your present ambitious, selfish spirit, thirsting for pre-eminence, to the spirit of children, *i.e.* to the unassuming, unambitious spirit of humility typified by a child. A child's restless activity must, however, be remembered. Though rejecting ambition, Jesus does not approve inactivity or acquiescence in things as they are. He stands for the strenuous life (cf. v. 6). But it is a strenuousness without self-seeking or desire to lord it over others. The Beatitudes give the content of the child spirit, the mind into which a man must change. *shall not enter.* Not even enter, let alone being the greatest. The thought is not that they will be kept out arbitrarily as a punishment, but that the spirit of the kingdom is the spirit of a child. To be out is a punishment, but it is due to the nature of things. The child stands at the gate of the ideal.

Ver. 4. Humility is produced by perception of the sublimity of the kingdom. The greater the humility, the greater is the capacity for perceiving and receiving the Divine. Cf. Jowett's remark on Gladstone, "It is the first time that any one of such great simplicity has been in so exalted a station."

## XVIII. 5-9. CONSIDERATE BEHAVIOUR TOWARDS LITTLE ONES.

- 5 And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name 6 receiveth me. But whoso shall offend one of these little ones

Ver. 5. *receive.* Lovingly recognise, honour, and welcome. *such little child.* The particular child before them becomes now the type of all childlike, insignificant ones. *in my name.* Having regard to Me; not of the natural attitude of a kindly nature towards a child, but of the Christian attitude inspired by the thought of Christ, which would be kindly even when a child does not naturally draw out tender sympathy. *receiveth me* (cf. x. 40). The identification of Christ with His little ones goes beyond, but is similar to, the truth in the saying, "Whoever lays his hand on the head of a little child lays it on a mother's heart."

Ver. 6. *offend*—"cause to stumble," *i.e.* into unbelief or sin

which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea. Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh! Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire.

(cf. xi. 6), through harsh treatment due to proud, ambitious passions—the opposite of receiving. But originally the saying would have a wider range than faults due to ambition.

*which . . . me.* The only case in the Synoptics where the object of faith is definitely said to be the Person of Christ. Young disciples are here in view, though children may have been the original thought. Christ's sayings are principles capable of endless adaptations. Converts of mature age are not so liable to be upset through the treatment they experience. *better*—i.e. better that he had perished before he thus ruined another soul. *a millstone*—"an ass's millstone," the upper of the two stones which ground the corn, here the heavy stone driven by an ass, not the lighter hand-driven millstone of xxiv. 41. *hanged.* Used of hanging on a gallows. *drowned.* A form of capital punishment practised by the Romans, Greeks, etc., but not by the Jews.

Ver. 7. *Woe.* More likely an exclamation of pity for the world as suffering miseries because of offences than a threat against the world as the offending party. *offences*—"stumbling-blocks." *must.* Not of the Divine Will, but of the necessity inherent in the disordered state of human affairs through the prevalence of ambitious passions. *woe.* Of the punishment which comes upon the offender.

Vers. 8, 9. These verses, already found with variations in v. 29, 30, have no connection with the subject, "little ones." They are taken from Mark ix. 43-47, where they are tacked on loosely to show still another danger in offences—the danger to one's own spiritual life when the stumbling-block lies in oneself (cf. notes on v. 29, 30). Hand and foot may, however, in this context be viewed as instruments of violent action towards others, and the sin of the eye may be here not lust so much as contempt.

*life*=eternal life, as in vii. 14. *everlasting.* The idea of any time limit cannot be supported by the prevalent usage of the word. The alternative is, however, between the eternal loss of a part and the eternal loss of the whole, and the idea simply is—"sacrifice the part to save the rest." *hell fire*—"the Gehenna of fire" (cf. v. 22).

## XVIII. 10-14. THE PRECIOUSNESS OF THE INDIVIDUAL.

- 10 Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones ; for I  
 say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold  
 11 the face of my Father which is in heaven. For the Son of  
 12 man is come to save that which was lost. How think ye ?  
 If a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone  
 astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth  
 into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray ?  
 13 And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he  
 rejoiceth more of that sheep, than of the ninety and nine  
 14 which went not astray. Even so it is not the will of your  
 Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones  
 should perish.

Ver. 10. *for*. Contempt, one of the gravest sins, is due to failure to recognise the infinite worth of the soul of each individual little one.

*I . . . you*. To speak on His own personal authority was Jesus' most solemn way of stating a weighty truth (cf. v. 22, etc.). *their angels*. It was current Jewish belief that each individual had a guardian angel (cf. Acts xii. 15). Whether Jesus held this belief or not, He uses it to reveal God's idea of each little one. They have a heavenly ideal side, which is always in God's thought. *behold the face of* (= stand in the immediate presence of), a phrase derived from the custom of Oriental courts, where only the most favoured persons had access to the presence of the monarch and saw his face (cf. 2 Kings xxv. 19). *my Father*. From this special honour paid to the guardian angels of the little ones by the Father, to whom Jesus stands in so unique a relation of sonship, it can be inferred how great is the worth of the individual soul, and the care God takes of him.

Ver. 11. This verse, by the evidence of MSS, is interpolated from Luke xix. 10.

Vers. 12-14. *an hundred*. A round figure for a large number, to contrast with the one straying sheep. *rejoiceth more*. Joy is indicative of the value placed upon the sheep. All the sheep are equally valued ; but while they are safe, the joy is a still joy. It is the threatened loss, which, giving a heightened consciousness of the value of the sheep, makes the joy intense. *the will*. The final reason for the serious warning of ver. 10. *little ones*. The parable in Matthew is applied to illustrate the preciousness to God of the individual soul *in itself*, whether a child or any insignificant one. In Luke xv. 4-7, while that truth underlies the story, the special point illustrated is the love of God, which seeks the lost, *i.e.* not little ones, as in Matthew, but sinful ones. Luke's connection looks like the original application of the parable, as was probably felt by the interpolator of ver. 11.

## XVIII. 15-20. THE ERRING BROTHER.

15 Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and  
 tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall  
 16 hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not  
 hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the  
 mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be es-  
 17 tablished. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it  
 unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let

Ver. 15. *thy brother*—*i.e.* Christian brother, fellow-disciple of Jesus. *against thee*. The words are omitted in some MSS, but a personal difference between two disciples is in any case in view. *tell him his fault*. More exactly, "convince him," *i.e.* get him to acknowledge the wrong. In v. 23, 24 the duty of attempting reconciliation is laid on the offending brother, here on the offended. It is a duty for both. *hear thee*—*i.e.* acknowledge his error and be reconciled. *gained*. In the sense of 1 Cor. ix. 19, 1 Pet. iii. 1, where it means gained for Christ. It is the same as "saved" under a different aspect, the opposite of "perish" (ver. 14).

Ver. 16. *one or two more*—*i.e.* in addition to thyself. *that . . . established*. Fulfilling the instructions of Deut. xix. 15. It is still a personal, private conference, not a judicial scene. They are present to try to convince the wrong-doer, their testimony helping to prove that he is in the wrong. There is no thought of their being able to testify afterwards that the offended brother has done his utmost to secure reconciliation, though that would be a consequence.

Ver. 17. *neglect*—"refuse." *the church*—"the brotherhood of those who believe in Jesus as the Messiah." Some think that vers. 16, 17 are an addition to the genuine saying of Jesus (ver. 15), to meet the necessities of the later church organisation. If not, then only the principle regulating the fellowship of the disciples will be in view, as no outward organisation had yet arisen. The formation of a church, indeed, as an organised religious institution separate from Judaism, is a later, though necessary, development not anticipated by the Twelve, as we see from the early chapters of Acts. *as an heathen man and a publican*. As the Gentile and the publican is to the Jew, *i.e.* as one outside the brotherhood. This expression sounds alien to the spirit of Jesus in the Gospels. How could it be reconciled with the Sermon on the Mount (v. 43-48), or ver. 22? If it be a saying of Jesus, it cannot contain any thought of ecclesiastical discipline or excommunication—a thought utterly alien to the Jesus of the Gospels. Christian fellowship, however, between individuals ("let him be unto thee"), being a mutual relationship of love, becomes impossible where there is no reconciliation. But even so, forgiveness, and acting as a brother towards the irreconcilable brother, are enjoined (cf. ver. 22, v. 43-48).

18 him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican. Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth  
 19 shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which  
 20 is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

Ver. 18. Cf. notes on xvi. 19.

Ver. 19 gives the reason for ver. 18. *two*. Even the minimum constituting a fellowship, a church. *of you*. Genuine disciples. *agree*. A sincere agreement, resting on identity of faith and of spiritual discernment. *any thing*. Wider than the case of an offending brother. *ask*. The power of ver. 18 rests on the power of sincere prayer in harmony with the will of God.

Ver. 20. *For*. The ultimate reason for the finality of their decision (ver. 18), and for the power of the prayer of agreed minds (ver. 19). *in my name*. Not gathered to worship Me, but gathered as believers in Me; a gathering having its *raison d'être* in Me. *am I . . . them*. Cf. the rabbinic saying, "Two, that sit together and are occupied in the words of the law, have the Shechinah (=the glory of the Divine Presence) among them." So in John xx. 22 the power to remit sins is due to the possession of the Holy Spirit. In this saying, as in xxviii. 20, the presence of Christ assumes the place and power of the presence of God in the O.T.

### XVIII. 21, 22. UNLIMITED FORGIVENESS.

21 Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?  
 22 Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times; but, Until seventy times seven.

Ver. 21. *came*. Coming forward to interrupt with a question. *how oft*. Peter sees the difficulty of carrying out the conciliatory spirit of ver. 13. Would Peter have asked whether there was a limit if ver. 17, which states a limit, had been spoken by Jesus? *my brother*—i.e. my Christian brother. *till seven times?* The Talmud limits forgiveness to three times: "The fourth time they do not forgive him." Peter goes further, but thinks of stopping at the sacred number, seven.

Ver. 22. *I say not unto thee, Until seven times*—"not, I say unto thee, until seven times." *seventy times seven*, or "seventy-seven times," probably the former. In either case, an indefinitely large number is meant, a way of saying "unlimited." There is probably a reference to Gen. iv. 24. Unlimited forgiveness is to take the place of the thirst for unlimited revenge.

## XVIII. 23-35. THE PARABLE OF THE UNMERCIFUL SERVANT.

23 Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain  
 24 king, which would take account of his servants. And when  
 he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which  
 25 owed him ten thousand talents: but forasmuch as he had  
 not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his  
 wife and children, and all that he had, and payment to be  
 26 made. The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped  
 him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay  
 27 thee all. Then the lord of that servant was moved with  
 compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt.  
 28 But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellow-  
 servants, which owed him an hundred pence; and he laid  
 hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me  
 29 that thou owest. And his fellow-servant fell down at his feet,  
 and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will  
 30 pay thee all. And he would not; but went and cast him  
 31 into prison, till he should pay the debt. So when his fellow-  
 servants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came  
 32 and told unto their lord all that was done. Then his lord,

Ver. 23. *Therefore*. Because forgiveness is required in the kingdom of heaven. *likened unto*—i.e. like the following story (cf. xiii. 45). *a certain king*—"a man, a king." The man is a king because only a king has the power which this man has in the parable.

Ver. 24. *ten thousand talents*=£2,400,000. He must have been one of the highest government officials, controlling the treasury. The magnitude of the debt is meant to express the hopelessness of payment.

Ver. 25. *to be sold*. According to the law of the ancients, modified but not abolished in Israel (cf. Lev. xxv. 39-41). *wife and children*. Regarded as the debtor's property. *payment*. It would not of course liquidate the debt, but in this way all that was possible would be got out of him.

Vers. 26, 27. *worshipped*. Prostration was the Oriental way of paying extreme homage and making abject supplication. *all*. An impossible promise wrung out of his anguish. *loosed*. From arrest (cf. John xix. 12).

Ver. 28. *an hundred pence*=about seventy shillings, an infinitesimal sum compared with his own debt. What a fellow-man owes us is equally infinitesimal compared with the debt we owe to God.

*laid . . . throat*. The creditor was allowed by Roman law to drag a man in this fashion to the court (cf. Luke xii. 58). The man is merciless.

after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst  
 33 me: shouldst not thou also have had compassion on thy  
 34 fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee? And his lord  
 was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he  
 35 should pay all that was due unto him. So likewise shall my  
 heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts for-  
 give not every one his brother their trespasses.

Vers. 33, 34. *shouldst*. It was a duty, though there had been no instinctive feeling. Inhumanity is always with Jesus a crowning sin. *tormentors*. Not merely to be imprisoned, but to be tortured. *till*. No thought of a time when the debt might be paid. The law simply pursues its course.

Ver. 35. *So—i.e.* the merciless He will treat mercilessly. *from your hearts*. From a voluntary inner sympathy as opposed to external compulsion.

## XIX. 1, 2. JOURNEY TO JUDEA.

1 AND it came to pass, that when Jesus had finished these  
 sayings, he departed from Galilee, and came into the coasts  
 2 of Judæa beyond Jordan: and great multitudes followed him;  
 and he healed them there.

Ver. 1. *departed*. The final departure from Galilee. *coasts*. Cf. xv. 21. *beyond Jordan—i.e.* by way of Peræa, on the east side of the Jordan.

## XIX. 3-12. THE QUESTION OF MARRIAGE.

3 The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and  
 saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife  
 4 for every cause? And he answered and said unto them,  
 Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning

Ver. 3. *came*. Either somewhere on the way up to Judæa or before leaving Galilee (cf. Mark x. 10). *tempting*. To force Him to contradict the Mosaic law (ver. 8) or His own teaching against divorce. *for every cause*. Practically the position of the school of Hillel (cf. notes on v. 31, 32). But Mark x. 2 looks like the original form of the question, and "for every cause" a modification by the evangelist. The attitude of the Pharisees here implies that they had heard of Jesus as the opponent of all divorce.

Ver. 4. Jesus takes up the challenge, first standing on Scripture and then (ver. 9) asserting His own position. *read* (Gen. i. 27). The Divine idea of marriage is expressed in the creation of man, as male

5 made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: 6 and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined 7 together, let not man put asunder. They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, 8 and to put her away? He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your 9 wives: but from the beginning it was not so. And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery; and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit 10 adultery. His disciples say unto him, If the case of the man

and female. *he . . . them.* Rather, "the Creator made them from the beginning."

Ver. 5. *and said*—*i.e.* "and the Creator said," because Gen. ii. 24 expresses the Creator's thought, though it was actually spoken by Adam or by the writer. *For this cause.* In Genesis because woman was made out of a rib of Adam, *i.e.* because woman is the missing part, the destined complement of the male. *cleave.* Before the sexual instinct, the instinct for the completion of personality, other natural instincts give way. *they twain.* In the LXX, not in the Hebrew, emphasising the idea that the union of the one man and the one woman destined for each other makes the one ideally complete person. *flesh.* A physical as well as a spiritual unity, personality having a physical basis.

Ver. 6. The ideal unity rests on God's will, and divorce is therefore an unnatural act contrary to God's will (=sin).

Ver. 7. *command.* Deut. xxiv. 1-4, correctly understood, does not enjoin divorce but only regulates the prevailing custom of divorce, but thereby it was naturally supposed by the Pharisees to sanction it. *writing of divorcement.* Cf. n. on i. 19, v. 31. *put her away.* The husband had formally to send her out of the house.

Ver. 8. *hardness.* The irreconcilable spirit which will not patiently endure. *suffered.* Moses only allowed it under the exigencies of their sinful condition. That did not disannul the original design.

Ver. 9. *I say.* Jesus' own word is final. Here the case of the man is alone considered. The case of the woman (Mark x. 12) is omitted by Matthew, possibly because it was not the Jewish custom to allow a woman to divorce her husband. *except . . . fornication.* Probably a later insertion (see n. on v. 32). The original design of marriage must be for Jesus surely the absolute law.

Ver. 10. The disciples are appalled by the severity of this ideal. They surely could not be, unless divorce were without exception disallowed, for the school of Shammai disallowed divorce with the one exception of fornication.



11 be so with his wife, it is not good to marry. But he said  
 unto them, All men cannot receive this saying, save they to  
 12 whom it is given. For there are some eunuchs, which were  
 so born from their mother's womb; and there are some  
 eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men; and there be  
 eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the king-  
 dom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him  
 receive it.

Ver. 11. *receive*—"take it in," so as to have a reason for not marrying, and power to abstain. *this saying*, viz. "that it is not good to marry." *it is given*—i.e. by God. Those who have spiritual insight to see the reason and a call to abstain. But while by "not good" the disciples mean that marriage under these conditions would be an intolerable strain, Jesus means by it that there are times when it is for the interests of the kingdom not to marry.

Ver. 12. The sense is, "Just as there are some born physically eunuchs, and some made physically eunuchs, so there are men who are morally eunuchs, i.e. who voluntarily abstain from marriage." This does not support celibacy as an enforced rule, but it does mean that when the interests of the kingdom demand it, there are some who will refuse to marry. Cf. the case of St. Paul (1 Cor. vii. 7). *able*. Through spiritual insight, not through strength of will. The implication is that few have the spiritual capacity required. Vers. 3-10 exalt marriage; vers. 11, 12 exalt renunciation of marriage, not for personal and prudential reasons, but for the kingdom's sake.

## XIX. 13-15. THE BLESSING OF THE CHILDREN.

13 Then were there brought unto him little children, that he  
 should put his hands on them, and pray: and the disciples  
 14 rebuked them. But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and  
 forbid them not, to come unto me; for of such is the kingdom

Ver. 13. *Then*. The connection with the foregoing is probably only topical. *put his hands*. The symbol and vehicle of blessing. Children were wont to be brought to distinguished pious Rabbis to be prayed over. Infant baptism preserves this consecration of children by Jesus. *rebuked*. For intruding on the busy Jesus. Misplaced reverence, zeal without knowledge, on the part of the disciples. *them*. Those who brought them, probably their mothers.

Ver. 14. *come unto me*. Generally as a lover of children, to whom they have access in all circumstances, more particularly as the conductor of personal spiritual blessing (cf. n. on xi. 28). *of such*—i.e. of childlike souls who come trustfully and unassumingly to receive (cf. xviii. 2-4).

15 of heaven. And he laid his hands on them, and departed thence.

Ver. 15. *thence*. Place unknown ; Galilee probably, where mothers knew Him. Perhaps they brought their children to receive His parting blessing.

#### XIX. 16-30. THE RENUNCIATION OF WEALTH.

16 And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?  
 17 And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into  
 18 life, keep the commandments. He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear  
 19 false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother; and,

Ver. 16. *behold*. A striking incident. *one*. An aspirant after the highest life. *Good Master*. Simply "Teacher," "Rabbi." Delete "Good," after the best MSS. It is found, however, in Mark x. 17, the original version of the story, as also in Luke xviii. 18. *what good thing*. He thinks that eternal life is the reward given for doing some special mysterious good thing. *eternal life*=the life of supreme blessedness, divine in nature as well as endless in time because divine; the favourite expression in the Fourth Gospel for what is usually called the kingdom of God in the Synoptics.

Ver. 17. *Why . . . God*. So Mark x. 18, Luke xviii. 19, no doubt the original saying. It calls on the man not to apply the word "good" loosely as a courtesy title. God only is absolutely good. Man is only becoming good. It might be a subtle suggestion to consider what Jesus is, if it be necessary to call Him good. But the true reading, at least in Matthew, is, "Why askest thou Me about the good? One is the good"—*i.e.* it is needless to ask what is the good; for God is the good, and the goodness required is revealed in His commandments, which are known to you. *but*. To give a direct answer to the question. *if . . . keep*—*i.e.* obedience to God's will, not a single special good deed to be done, as this man imagined, gives entrance into life.

Vers. 18, 19. *Which?* There were such a multitude of commandments in the law—the scribes reckoned 613, and tradition had added still more. Jesus replies by quoting the second table of the Decalogue with, "Thou . . . thyself" (Lev. xix. 18), substituted for the tenth commandment. The addition of Lev. xix. 18 may be due to Matthew. Mark has "defraud not." The love of our neighbour is the vital test of obedience to God.

- 20 Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet? Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come and follow me.
- 22 But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions. Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of

Ver. 20. *kept*. The testimony of a good conscience; not self-righteous, simply unaware of disobedience, betraying no depths of moral sensitiveness. *what lack I yet?* Conscious of not having the rest and satisfaction which follow from possession of the highest good, and yet not aware of disobedience, he returns to his original question, inferring there must be something he is still deficient in, *i.e.* something he has not yet done. What can it be? Genuine perplexity.

Ver. 21. *wilt*. A test whether this feeling of want is an inclination of the will. Where there's a will, there's a way. *perfect*=realise the end for which you were made, *i.e.* love which brings rest (cf. v. 49). *sell . . . hast*. The one more thing is literal renunciation of wealth, not as though poverty earned eternal life, or were required of all. Spiritual renunciation of goods is required of all, but not literal. For if it were wrong in itself to possess goods, it would be wrong for him to sell them to others. But this particular man has that in him which can only find its satisfaction in an apostolic life. Renunciation is the only way for him, and tests whether he has perfect love and freedom of soul, whether he has the gold, or the gold has him. *treasure in heaven*. Transcendental spiritual riches now as well as hereafter. *follow me*. An invitation to join the inner apostolic circle, seriously meant, and explaining the reason for the great sacrifice asked from him. He is a potential hero, and can only be happy if he were to become what his nature aspires after—an apostle.

Ver. 22. *sorrowful*. Genuine sorrow—"the high that proved too high, the heroic for earth too hard." The Twelve had indeed forsaken all, but they had not great possessions to forsake.

Vers. 23, 24. *hardly*—*i.e.* with great difficulty. Jesus is disappointed, sad, and pitiful, as He sees the rich man moving away sorrowful; and yet it was only what you might expect of a rich man. *again*. Repeating the same thought with increased severity, due to the incredulous looks of the Twelve (cf. Mark x. 24). *camel . . . needle*. A proverbial hyperbolic way of expressing impossibility, still current in the East (cf. xxiii. 24). Some travellers say that the

25 God. When his disciples heard it, they were exceedingly  
 26 amazed, saying, Who then can be saved? But Jesus beheld  
 them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but  
 27 with God all things are possible. Then answered Peter and  
 said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed  
 28 thee; what shall we have therefore? And Jesus said unto  
 them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed  
 me, in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit in  
 the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones,  
 29 judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And every one that hath

small door in the large gate closing the entrance to a city is called by Jews and Arabs the needle's eye. Though a man could pass through that door when the gate was shut, it would be impossible for a camel. The modification in Mark x. 24, "trust in riches," is to be deleted, following the best MSS. The point is that it is only through consciousness of need that one can enter the kingdom (cf. v. 3). A rich man, as a rich man, quite apart from trusting in riches, cannot enter (cf. Luke xvi. 19-31).

Ver. 25. *Who . . . saved.* The disciples rightly conclude that such a stern word about the rich throws every man's salvation into doubt. For other things than material riches—*e.g.* intellectual riches, the cares of the world, love of kindred—may equally bar the way (cf. ver. 29; Luke xiv. 26).

Ver. 26. *beheld.* Looking on them with pity and sympathy. *With men.* Not merely "in man's judgment," but "by mere human resources." *this*=the saving of the rich, perhaps we should say the saving of any, which was Peter's question. *with God*—*i.e.* God has a way of overcoming this impossibility, *e.g.* by grace, by awakening the sense of need through suffering, by inspiring the serviceable use of money, as in Luke xvi. 9.

Vers. 27, 28. *we*—who have done what the rich man could not. *Verily.* Emphatic. Compensation is certain. *regeneration.* The creation of a new heaven and a new earth, which was to follow the coming of the Messiah (cf. Isa. lxv. 17; Rev. xxi. 1-5). *Son of man.* Cf. Appendix, Note C. *ye . . . Israel.* The special reward of the Twelve, as in Luke xxii. 30, extended to all saints in 1 Cor. vi. 2; Rev. iii. 21. *tribes of Israel.* To whom they had preached (x. 6, 23). The Twelve, inasmuch as they are the bearers of the truth given them by Christ, become the rulers and judges of those to whom they preached. Whether in the Son of Man or in the Twelve, the Truth rules and judges; and as the former is commissioned by God, so the latter are commissioned by the Son of Man, to be the agents through whom the Truth rules and judges.

Ver. 29. *everyone.* An extension of the same principle. As there is a special reward for the Twelve, so there is a reward for all. *wife.* Omitted by some MSS, and probably rightly. No forsaking

forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.  
 30 But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first.

of wife, in the sense of separation, is allowed (vers. 3-9). *for . . . sake*. From loyalty to Christ. *receive*. In Mark x. 30 the compensation is in the present, here in the future, after the "regeneration" of things. This is a reward in addition to eternal life, which is the common heritage.

Ver. 30. *first . . . last*—"firsts . . . lasts." More than one occupy first or last places in the kingdom. This saying, capable of different applications (cf. xx. 16; Luke xiii. 30), is best taken as a warning to Peter's self-complacent and mercenary spirit, and to his tendency to compare himself with another (ver. 27). All who have by surrender to Christ sacrificed anything are sure of everlasting life, but many who are first now to follow Christ in point of time, or first in degree or service and sacrifice, shall be on the level of the last in glory in the future kingdom; while the last—even the rich man, were he to follow, serve, and sacrifice at last—shall be on the level of the first. Service and sacrifice ensure a place, but the spirit in which they are performed on the one hand, and the gifts and calling of God on the other (xx. 23), determine what place.

## XX. 1-16. PARABLE OF THE LABOURERS IN THE VINEYARD— THE GRACE OF GOD.

- 1 FOR the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire
- 2 labourers into his vineyard. And when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vine-

The parable turns on the householder's method of payment, not on the work or motive of the labourers. The idea is that God will give eternal life to all who have served Him, irrespective of their length of service. It is a parable of the Grace of God.

Ver. 1. *For*. Referring back to xix. 30; but the connection is not clear, for the parable does not set forth to teach how there may be a future inequality, but how by grace the last is made equal with the first in the matter of eternal life. The original setting of the parable may have been a little different. *the kingdom*. Here the kingdom to come. *is like unto a man*—i.e. God's way of rewarding when the kingdom comes is like what a man does who, etc. (cf. xiii. 45). *early in the morning*—i.e. at the first hour, 6 a.m.

Vers. 2-5. *a penny*—a denarius=8½d., the ordinary day's wage. *the third hour*=9 a.m. *idle*=unemployed. *right*—i.e. just, fair. *the sixth and ninth hour*=12 and 3 p.m.

3 yard. And he went out about the third hour, and saw  
 4 others standing idle in the market-place, and said unto them,  
 Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will  
 5 give you. And they went their way. Again he went out  
 6 about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise. And  
 about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others  
 standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all  
 7 the day idle? They say unto him, Because no man hath  
 hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard;  
 8 and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive. So when even  
 was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward,  
 Call the labourers, and give them their hire, beginning from  
 9 the last unto the first. And when they came that were  
 hired about the eleventh hour, they received every man a  
 10 penny. But when the first came, they supposed that they  
 should have received more; and they likewise received  
 11 every man a penny. And when they had received it, they  
 12 murmured against the goodman of the house, saying, These  
 last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them  
 equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the  
 13 day. But he answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do

Ver. 6. *the eleventh hour*=5 p.m. *Why . . . idle?* In a tone of surprise and reproof, probably because it was grape-harvest, when labour would be in great demand.

Ver. 7. *Because . . . us.* They were willing to work, but lacked opportunity. Perhaps they showed a lack of initiative in not seeking work, but whether it were their fault or not does not affect the issue in the parable. *and . . . receive* is to be omitted with the best MSS. He says nothing to these about payment, but that of course is understood.

Vers. 8-10. *even.* The interest lies in what happened at evening. *beginning . . . last.* Not indicating any preference for the last. It is a literary device to explain how the discontent of the first arises. If they had not seen the last getting a full day's wage, they would not have murmured. The intermediate groups also get a penny, of course, but the interest is concentrated on the extremes.

Ver. 12. *saying.* To the goodman, who is not likely to have been present. The wages would be paid by his steward. They would bring their complaint to the proprietor, hoping to get a better wage by appealing to his sense of justice.

*These.* Contemptuous. *equal.* The whole point of complaint. It seems unjust.

*the burden*=the whole day's work. *heat.* When the conditions were trying, under the midday sun and the dusty, parching south-east wind, the sirocco blowing from the desert.

Ver. 13. *one.* An individual addressed for vivid dramatic effect

thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny?  
 14 Take that thine is, and go thy way: I will give unto this last  
 15 even as unto thee. Is it not lawful for me to do what I  
 will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good?  
 16 So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be  
 called, but few chosen.

—suggests Peter (cf. xix. 27). The personal spirit is the trouble.  
*Friend.* A kindly but reproachful tone. *no wrong*—i.e. no injustice.  
*agree.* No fault is found with working for wages. They all work  
 for what they will get, being rational mortals. Simply the promise  
 is kept. Perhaps this was the man with whom the contract was  
 made on behalf of the group.

Ver. 14. *thine.* Not contemptuous; simple truth, because the  
 stipulated work is done. It is a simple exchange of values, according  
 to agreement. Eternal life is a gift of grace to all. No one ever gives  
 the actual value of it in work here, but once the service is done to  
 which the gracious promise of eternal life is attached, it becomes a  
 debt of justice. *go thy way.* Not dismissed from service, but simply  
 argument is at an end. They did show the mercenary spirit, but that  
 does not cut a man out of eternal life. Only it changes a debt of love,  
 which is infinite, into a debt of justice, which can be calculated and  
 gets but the universal minimum wage. Of course there are obvious  
 limits to the length which a parable of wages can go in illustrating  
 what is after all the supreme act of grace. *I . . . thee.* The word of  
 a lover, not of an arbitrary tyrant. *this last.* Pointing to an individual,  
 suggestive of the Rich Ruler, supposing, for the sake of the discussion,  
 that he were to start even at the eleventh hour. He was the occasion  
 of the whole discussion with Peter. *even as unto thee.* The penny,  
 the minimum wage=eternal life. The future equality in the kingdom  
 is only equality in so far as all have the life eternal. Cf. xix. 28, 30,  
 which speaks of grades of life, degrees of glory. The last get more  
 than justice, not because they have worked harder in their one hour,—  
 all are supposed to do the average amount of work per hour,—nor  
 because they went on trust, nor because they had a better spirit, but  
 solely because of the grace of the householder.

Ver. 15. *do . . . will.* Presupposing that nothing unjust is done.  
 There is nothing unjust in being more than just. Besides, looking  
 beyond the parable, all will be treated on principles of grace. *mine  
 own.* Grace robs no man. *eye evil*—i.e. niggardly, grudging, grieving  
 at the good of another (cf. vi. 23). *good*—i.e. generous, kindly.

Ver. 16. *So.* Because God thus acts from grace as well as justice.  
*the last . . . last.* Here the saying means, both are placed on the  
 same level. Those who enter the service late and those who enter it  
 early alike receive eternal life. But God is not generous to sinners  
 and only just to saints (cf. notes on ver. 14, xix. 28, 30).

*for many . . . chosen.* Wanting in the best MSS, an interpolation  
 from xxii. 14, quite out of keeping with the parable.

## XX. 17-19. THIRD PREDICTION OF THE PASSION.

- 17 And Jesus going up to Jerusalem took the twelve disciples  
 18 apart in the way, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to  
 Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the  
 chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn  
 19 him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock,  
 and to scourge, and to crucify him: and the third day he  
 shall rise again.

Ver. 17. *going up*. Jesus has probably by this time crossed the Jordan, and is approaching Jericho. *apart*. Because of the accompanying crowd (xix. 2).

Vers. 18, 19. *The Son of man*. Cf. Appendix, Note C. *chief priests . . . scribes*=the Sanhedrin. *Gentiles*=the Roman tribunal. *mock . . . crucify*. Details not mentioned in the earlier predictions (xvi. 21, xvii. 22). Matthew's "crucify" for Mark's "kill" may be due to the event, but Jesus may easily have spoken of the Cross as the manner of His death (cf. x. 38).

## XX. 20-28. THE PERSONAL AMBITION OF THE SONS OF ZEBEDEE.

- 20 Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children with  
 her sons, worshipping him, and desiring a certain thing of  
 21 him. And he said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith  
 unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on  
 thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom.  
 22 But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask.  
 Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and  
 to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?

Ver. 20. *Then*. After this prediction of His Passion there comes a request for the places of honour in the coming kingdom. The prediction passed over their heads. The thought of xix. 28 excited their ambition. *mother*. Matthew makes the mother present the request, instead of her sons, as in Mark x. 35 (cf. Introduction, p. xviii). *worshipping*. Prostrating herself at His feet. *certain*. A vague request, as if she were afraid to mention it.

Ver. 22. Jesus addresses James and John. *know not*. They do not know that to sit beside Jesus on the throne they would have to pass through a corresponding suffering (cf. 2 Tim. ii. 12). *cup*. Metaphor for evil fortune, suffering (cf. Isa. li. 17). So also baptism, *i.e.* by immersion (cf. Ps. xlii. 7); but the phrase about



23 They say unto him, We are able. And he saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be  
 24 given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father. And when the ten heard it, they were moved with indignation  
 25 against the two brethren. But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise  
 26 authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your  
 27 minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him  
 28 be your servant: even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

baptism here and in ver. 23 is omitted in the best MSS. It is interpolated from Mark x. 38, 39. *We are able*. A confidence inspired by sincere devotion to Christ, but full of ignorance. They did not even know that suffering is the path to glory (cf. n. on ver. 20). *shall drink*—"are about to drink." It is very near now.

Ver. 23. Jesus passes over the blind confidence of their ignorance, and appreciates their brave devotion. Hardship and suffering will indeed be their destiny, and they will endure their lot and bravely follow in His steps. But even that will not secure the highest places of honour. They are not in Christ's power to give, nor are they given as a personal favour, but on ground of fitness and calling. *is prepared*—"has been prepared," already determined by gifts and calling, *i.e.* by God, as Matthew makes clear by adding "of my Father" to Mark x. 40. *of my Father*=by Him whose spirit is the spirit of His Son Jesus; and therefore not by an arbitrary will, but by justice, grace, and love.

Ver. 24. *indignation*. Showing by their jealousy that they too are actuated by the same ambitious passions.

Ver. 25. The pagan ideal of greatness, which Jesus displaces. *called them*. They were quarrelling at a distance from Him. *exercise dominion over*. "Lord it over" in a bad sense, ruthlessly crushing the will and welfare of others to further their own interests. So also *exercise authority*. *that are great*—*i.e.* in position, the magnates of the world.

Ver. 26. The general principle, "to be great is to minister" (ver. 26), is more strongly stated in ver. 27; he who would climb the highest must stoop the lowest. *chief*—"first" in rank. *servant*—"slave."

Ver. 28. *even as*. His own life is the standard example, because it is the foundation of the new order. *the Son of man*. Cf. Appendix, Note C. *give his life*. Jesus was the first to make suffering and death part of the vocation of the Messiah. His death is here spoken of

not as His whole vocation, but as its natural and inevitable climax. *for many* might be connected with ransom, but is better taken with "give," as in Matt. xvii. 27. *Many* does not mean "not all," but "the multitude of men." The One Son of Man, whose soul is free, stands over against the many, whose souls are forfeit. The word translated "for"—lit. "over against"—ordinarily means, "instead of," "taking the place of," as in Luke xi. 11, "for a fish, a serpent." Occasionally it tends to a more general sense. Cf. Matt. xvii. 27, "for me and thee," i.e. to stand against and thus meet our obligation. The former makes Christ's life to be given as a substitute for the lives of many, the latter makes His self-sacrifice to meet a demand the many are unable to meet. Either way He speaks of His death as a substitutionary redemptive act, voluntary and yet destined, the inevitable consequence of the vocation which He voluntarily assumed. In either case it is the price paid to set men free from the soul-destroying slavery from which they cannot deliver themselves, and that is clearly sin.

#### XX. 29-34. HEALING OF THE BLIND MEN AT JERICHO.

- 29 And as they departed from Jericho, a great multitude followed  
 30 him. And, behold, two blind men sitting by the way-side,  
 when they heard that Jesus passed by, cried out, saying,  
 31 Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou son of David! And the  
 multitude rebuked them, because they should hold their  
 peace: but they cried the more, saying, Have mercy on us,  
 32 O Lord, thou son of David! And Jesus stood still, and  
 called them, and said, What will ye that I shall do unto  
 33 you? They say unto him, Lord, that our eyes may be

Ver. 29. *Jericho*. A city with fine buildings, lying in a very rich tract at the foot of the mountains, "the City of Palm Trees." The road from Jericho to Jerusalem ascended through rocky ravines, infested with robbers. *multitude*. Pilgrims to the feast flocking after Jesus.

Ver. 30. *two*. Only one in Mark x. 46-52, called Bartimæus (cf. viii. 28, ix. 27). *sitting by the way-side*. The posture of beggars. *heard*. In answer (Luke xviii. 36) to an inquiry what the reason for the crowd was. *cried out*. The fame of the Healer had reached them. *Lord*. In the exalted sense. *son of David*. Popular title for the Messiah.

Ver. 31. *rebuked*. (cf. xix. 13). The cry of humanity seemed to them an intrusion. So little did they know Jesus. *the more*. Opposition only stung them to make their need known to Jesus.

Ver. 32. *stood still*. The cry of need never finds Jesus too busy to help. *will ye*. Need must explain itself. It might be only charity they wanted.

34 opened. So Jesus had compassion on them, and touched their eyes; and immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed him.

Ver. 34. *compassion*. The compassion of one above the need who has power, heart, and will to help (cf. ix. 36, xiv. 14, xv. 32). *received sight*—"saw again," not blind from birth. *followed him*. Joined in the accompanying crowd.

## XXI.-XXVII. THE LAST DAYS.

### XXI. 1-11. TRIUMPHANT ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM.

1 AND when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage, unto the mount of Olives, then sent Jesus two  
2 disciples, saying unto them, Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with  
3 her: loose them, and bring them unto me. And if any man say ought unto you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need of  
4 them; and straightway he will send them. (All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the  
5 prophet, saying, Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and

Ver. 1. *Bethphage*—lit. "house of figs." It was a village near Bethany, surrounded with fig gardens, about two miles from Jerusalem, better known than Bethany, but there is not a trace left of it. At this point Jerusalem broke into view, separated from the Mount of Olives by the deep valley of Kidron.

Ver. 2. *the village*. Bethphage, on the outskirts of which they were. In Mark xi. 2, Bethany, a little farther on, is probably meant. *straightway*—i.e. at the entrance. *an ass* (=she-ass) and *a colt*. Mark mentions only the latter. Matthew's mention of the mother and her foal is due to the prophecy, ver. 5. *loose*. Without asking permission.

Ver. 3. The owner was probably an acquaintance of Jesus. *The Lord*. In the exalted sense. *need*. Not surely because of the difficult ascent, but rather because Jesus is entering Jerusalem as the King Messiah, and symbolises in this act His own description of His character (xi. 29). He enters not as a proud king on his war-horse, but as the humble Prince of Peace. *he* (the owner) *will send them*, in place of Mark's "he (the Lord) will return it."

Ver. 4. *that . . . fulfilled* (cf. i. 22). Matthew here clearly thinks that Jesus consciously intended to fulfil the prophecy. It is His design to declare Himself openly the Messiah, and bring events to a climax.

Ver. 5. *Tell . . . Sion*. From Isa. lxii. 11, LXX. *Behold . . .*

6 a colt the foal of an ass.) And the disciples went, and did  
 7 as Jesus commanded them, and brought the ass, and the  
 colt, and put on them their clothes, and they set him  
 8 thereon. And a very great multitude spread their garments  
 in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and  
 9 strawed them in the way. And the multitudes that went  
 before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the son  
 of David! Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the  
 10 Lord! Hosanna in the highest! And when he was come  
 into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, Who is this?  
 11 And the multitude said, This is Jesus the prophet of  
 Nazareth of Galilee.

*ass.* Zech. ix. 9, LXX. *ass . . . ass*, however, is not a quotation from the LXX, but a translation of the Hebrew text. In the Hebrew only one animal is meant, the expression being due to Hebraic parallelism.

Ver. 7. *their clothes*—*i.e.* their upper garments. *they set him*—“He sat.”

Ver. 8. *a*—“the” multitude of pilgrims who were accompanying Him (xx. 31). *their garments*—*i.e.* their upper garments, infected by the example of the two disciples (ver. 7). By this enthusiastic, if embarrassing, homage shown to kings (cf. 2 Kings ix. 13), they acclaim Jesus Messiah.

Ver. 9. Jesus rides in the middle between two thronging crowds. *Hosanna*=“save now,” an address to God in Ps. cxviii. 25, here equivalent to Hail! Hail to the Messiah! *Blessed . . . Lord*. From Ps. cxviii. 26, interpreted in a Messianic sense. *Hosanna in the highest*—“in the heights”=“let those in the heights (*i.e.* of heaven) say Hosanna,” rather than, “may our Hosanna be heard in the heights.”

Ver. 10. *moved*. As by an earthquake, at the bursts of acclamation. *Who is this?* Jesus is personally unknown to these Jerusalemites.

Ver. 11. *the multitude*—*i.e.* the Galilean pilgrims accompanying Jesus. *the prophet*. The famed prophet of whom Jerusalem, like everybody, had heard. There was no doubt a feeling of local patriotic pride in the answer of the Galileans. *Our countryman!*

## XXI. 12, 13. THE CLEANSING OF THE TEMPLE.

12 And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all

Ver. 12. *went*. Matthew has transposed the sequence of events, making the cleansing take place on the first day, instead of on the

them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that  
 13 sold doves, and said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves.

second (Mark xi. 15). *the temple*. The first place Jesus visited on entering the city. So also Mark xi. 11.

*cast out . . . doves*. This took place in the large outer court of the temple, called the Court of the Gentiles, separated from the shrine by a stone parapet, on which tablets were placed warning Gentiles not to cross it on pain of death. In this Outer Court all that was needed for the sacrifices—oxen, sheep, doves, meal, wine, etc.—was sold. Exchangers sat at tables in the court to change the current Roman coin, at a small profit, for the didrachma, the old Jewish coin, in which sacred coinage the temple tax (cf. xvii. 24) could alone be paid. The doves were the offering of the poor. The whole scene would be like a fair, and the tumult most disturbing to the worshippers inside. Jesus' reforming zeal was not merely moral indignation, but an assertion of His Lordship over the temple. His success in clearing them out wholesale is more easily understood from the presence of the crowds of Galilean pilgrims who had escorted Him into the city in triumph. He appeared as the Leader of a large, enthusiastic party.

Ver. 13. *is written*. Jesus supports His action from Scripture. *the* (rather "a") *house of prayer*. From Isa. lvi. 7. *den of thieves*. Jer. vii. 11. It must have been a common enough practice with these traders to cheat the pilgrims. The immorality and the irreverence must both have roused Jesus.

## XXI. 14-17. THE DISPLEASURE OF THE PRIESTS.

14 And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple;  
 15 and he healed them. And when the chief priests and scribes

Ver. 14. Matthew substitutes a healing for Mark's teaching activity in the Temple, as introductory to vers. 15, 16. Cf. for a similar change, xiv. 14, xix. 2.

Ver. 15. *the chief priests and scribes*. The hierarchical party, who had mostly ignored Jesus hitherto, now work for His destruction, their interests being threatened by this reforming temple zeal. The sons of Annas, who were chief priests, had a monopoly of these sales in the temple, and drew immense profits from them. It was the ruling hierarchy who were the leading agents in doing Him to death. The scribes were mostly of the Pharisaic party, but some sided with the priestly class. The priests were of course in league with the Pharisees in this tragic drama, but the priests led the

saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying, Hosanna to the son of David; 16 they were sore displeased, and said unto him, Hearest thou what these say? And Jesus saith unto them, Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou 17 hast perfected praise? And he left them, and went out of the city into Bethany; and he lodged there.

attack, and it was the cleansing of the temple which maddened them. Mammon and vested interests drove the nails into Christ.

*the wonderful things*—i.e. the miracles of healing (ver. 14). *the children*—who had caught up the cry of the Galilean pilgrims (ver. 9), and kept it up in the temple. *sore displeased*. Children's voices were to them a desecration of the temple.

Ver. 16. *these*. They fell foul of the children, but beneath that, and beneath their dislike to Jesus' humanitarian healings, lay the deeper animosity of those who feel that their place and power are at stake. *Yea*. Emphatic. Frank delight in children and hearty approval of their natural ways. *Out of . . . praise*. Ps. viii. 3, according to the LXX. The Hebrew "hast founded strength," which means that the simple faith of children is a bulwark of God against the hostile wills of unbelief, would not be so apt. In the spontaneous cries of unsophisticated little children Jesus feels the praise of God is made perfect.

Ver. 17. *Bethany*. Two miles out of Jerusalem, where Jesus passes the evening during the Passion week in the house of friends, likely enough in the home of Martha and Mary.

## XXI. 18-22. THE WITHERING OF THE FIG TREE.

18 Now in the morning, as he returned into the city, he 19 hungered. And when he saw a fig tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever.

Ver. 19. *Let . . . ever*. Better, "There shall no more be fruit from thee for ever." The curse of Mark xi. 14 is changed by Matthew into a prophecy. The best explanation is that Jesus in the prophetic manner makes this fig tree a symbol of Israel (cf. Hos. ix. 10). On the fig tree the green fruit is formed first, and then the tree is covered with leaves. "A fig tree with full leaf in early spring without fruit is a diseased tree." This fig tree in full leaf with no fruit underneath is like Israel, with her outward pretentious show of ritual observance without any ethical fruit underneath. She is in a state of moral decay and will wither away like the diseased fig tree. *presently*—"immediately." Matthew makes the withering take place immediately,

20 And presently the fig tree withered away. And when the disciples saw it, they marvelled, saying, How soon is the fig  
 21 tree withered away! Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be  
 22 thou cast into the sea; it shall be done. And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.

while in Mark xi. 20 it is observed the next day to have withered. But Matthew in this section has condensed the events of two days into one.

Vers. 20, 21. *How soon*—"how immediately." This rather strange wonder at the immediacy of the event is Matthew's way of transforming Mark xi. 21 to introduce ver. 21, which is the saying of xvii. 20 modified in accordance with Mark xi. 23. *faith*—i.e. trust in God and confidence in His giving to the believer power to work miracles. Cf. notes on xvii. 20.

#### XXI. 23-27. THE QUESTION OF JESUS' AUTHORITY.

23 And when he was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, By what authority doest thou these  
 24 things? and who gave thee this authority? And Jesus answered and said unto them, I also will ask you one thing, which if ye tell me, I in like wise will tell you by what  
 25 authority I do these things. The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will

Ver. 23. *the chief . . . elders*. Prominent members of the Sanhedrin (cf. ver. 15). *these things*. Here, as in Luke xx. 2, the immediate reference is to His teaching; but the main point of contention was probably, as it seems to be in Mark xi. 27, the cleansing of the temple the day before, with the underlying claim to be the Messiah.

Ver. 24. *one thing*. Only one, but one which tests the point at issue, Jesus' authority, because John bore witness to the coming of the Messiah (iii. 11, 12), and the implication seems to be, bore witness to Jesus as the Messiah.

Ver. 25. *The baptism*. As embodying the essence of John's ministry. *of men*—i.e. not a Divine commission. *with themselves*. Either in their hearts, as is most probable, or speaking with each

26 say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him? But if we shall say, Of men; we fear the people; for all hold John as  
 27 a prophet. And they answered Jesus, and said, We cannot tell. And he said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.

other. *believe him*—i.e. accept his Messianic message and testimony. They see perfectly well the conclusion which the admission of the truth would bind them to.

Ver. 26, 27. *a prophet*. Therefore of God. They would like to say that John was no prophet, but they dared not say so publicly (cf. Luke xx. 6). *We cannot tell*. A true official answer, prompted by expediency. Jesus refuses to answer a question to men who are not true and sincere.

#### XXI. 28-32. THE PARABLE OF THE TWO SONS—OBEDIENCE, NOT PROFESSION, LEADS INTO THE KINGDOM.

28 But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to-day in my vine-  
 29 yard. He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he  
 30 repented, and went. And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir; and went  
 31 not. Whether of them twain did the will of his father?

This may not be the original occasion of this parable, which is peculiar to Matthew, but it is quite appropriate, though applicable to many other occasions.

Ver. 28. *Son*—"child." The father uses no compulsion. It is the obligation of love to obey and to work. *go . . . vineyard*. Better, "go to-day, work in the vineyard." *to-day*. It is an exceptional work, whose value lies in its being done to-day.

Ver. 29. *I will not*. Rude but frank disobedience, due partly to laziness, partly to headstrong self-will. He does not say "father." *repented*. Not of a religious change of mind, but simply "was sorry." His conscience smote him. *and went*. Early enough, no doubt, to make up for lost time by greater exertion. He would, however, have been a more ideal son if he had asked his father to forgive him.

Ver. 30. *the second*. There is no thought of their difference of age, solely of disposition. It is a piece of work which one man can do, and the father goes to the second simply because the first has refused. *said likewise*. Both in words and tone. The father is not the cause of the different result in either case. *I go*. Instant readiness to obey in word. At the moment he may not have been a conscious hypocrite. *sir*—lit. "lord." The attitude of Oriental slavish submissiveness, not of filial love. The father called him "child."

Ver. 31. *did the will*. The point of the parable, not professing



They say unto him, The first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go  
 32 into the kingdom of God before you. For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not: but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him.

but doing God's will leads to the kingdom (cf. vii. 21). The two sons do not, however, typify all mankind: for some say no, and abide by their refusal; and others say yes readily, and alter not. *The first.* Condemning themselves, for they profess to be God's servants, even priests! and yet follow their own obstinate will. *publicans* (cf. n. on v. 46) *and harlots.* Not all of them, of course, but as a class they were more responsive. *go . . . before you.* Not "will go," because Jesus is stating a present fact of His experience and observation, not prophesying about entrance into the future kingdom. Hence Matthew does not change the phrase "Kingdom of God," found in his source, into his usual "Kingdom of the Heavens." The meaning is that they are far in advance of you on the way to the kingdom, *i.e.* far more responsive to God's rule. *Before you* does not imply that these official leaders of the people are going or will go into the kingdom, though after them. They would, of course, if they repented, and did the will of God. But as things stand, in the race to the kingdom they have lost the place of primacy. They have rejected the call (ver. 32), and the following parable (33 ff.) expresses their judgment.

Ver. 32. *For.* Explaining how these official leaders have lost in the race. *in the way of righteousness.* Some interpret this of John's righteous manner of life. But "in" may mean "with," and the reference to John's teaching of what is required by righteousness, or of what leads to it, is better. More definitely the reference is to John's prophetic ("came," *i.e.* from God, of a prophet) ministry, as herald of the coming kingdom and Messiah, with his call to repentance in view of their coming, symbolised in his baptism (cf. ver. 25). *believed him not.* Not of trust in his person, but acceptance of his message, *i.e.* of the call of God through him. *seen it—i.e.* how the outcasts accepted his message. *repented.* As in ver. 29. *might believe.* Rather, "so as to believe him." Their conscience did not so smite them as to bring about this result—belief in John's message. They turned their backs on a kingdom which appealed to publicans and harlots. Notice how "believe him," *i.e.* respond to and accept his message, corresponds in the Parable of the Two Sons to "work," "doing the will."

XXI. 33-46. THE PARABLE OF THE WICKED VINE-DRESSERS  
—THE MURDER OF THE MESSIAH AND THE JUDGMENT  
ON THE HIERARCHY.

33 Hear another parable: There was a certain householder,  
which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and  
34 dugged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to  
husbandmen, and went into a far country: and when the  
35 time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the  
husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it. And  
36 the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed  
another, and stoned another. Again, he sent other servants  
37 more than the first: and they did unto them likewise. But  
last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will  
38 reverence my son. But when the husbandmen saw the son,  
they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us  
39 kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. And they  
caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him.

This is not a parable in the strict sense of the word. It sets forth the impending fate of Jesus in the form of an allegory, and the judgment on the hierarchy to whom it is addressed.

Ver. 33. *hedged . . . tower.* These details are taken from Isa. v. 2, where the vineyard represents Israel. They mean that God has done everything possible to make the vineyard a good one. The hedge (=fence) is to keep out the wild beasts. The winepress is set in a trench. The tower is to protect the fruit from robbers. *let it out*—i.e. on the system of receiving part of the fruits, as in Luke xx. 10. *went . . . country.* To provide occasion in the allegory for messages through intermediaries. *servants*—i.e. the prophets.

Ver. 34. *the time of the fruit.* The fifth year, according to Lev. xix. 25. *the fruits*—i.e. the stipulated portion. Outside the allegory they are the fruits of righteousness and repentance, which God always looked to find in Israel, but in vain.

Vers. 35, 36. *stoned.* The climax, a specially severe form of death. *more . . . first.* Probably to represent the long-suffering of God and the increasing guilt of Israel. The details cannot be pressed. Simply all the prophets, whenever they came, were shamefully treated.

Vers. 37-39. *son*=Christ, as opposed to the servants, the prophets. *saying*—i.e. to Himself. *the heir.* The Messiah is the heir (cf. Ps. ii. 8). They think that if the heir be killed, there will be no one to dispute the possession with them. They cast him out before they kill him, under the Jewish idea that the vineyard would be made unclean if his blood were on it. But this order of events, as it varies from Mark, is no doubt due to the influence of the fact that Jesus was crucified outside the city.

40 When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will  
 41 he do unto those husbandmen? They say unto him, He  
 will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his  
 vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the  
 42 fruits in their seasons. Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never  
 read in the Scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected,  
 the same is become the head of the corner: this is the  
 43 Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? Therefore  
 say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from  
 you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.  
 44 And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but  
 on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.  
 45 And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his

Vers. 40, 41. *cometh*. In the eschatological sense of coming to judgment. *They say*. Expressing their own judgment, as in ver. 31. *miserably . . . wicked*—"miserably . . . miserable," a play upon words. *shall render*. There is no doubt of their doing so, for they are the elect. *seasons*. As the yearly harvest comes.

Ver. 42. *The stone* in Ps. cxviii. 22, 23 (= Israel so lightly esteemed by the world) is here applied to Christ, the Messiah, the ideal of Israel. *head of the corner*=the corner-stone binding the two walls together. *the Lord's doing*. God will turn the rejection of Christ into a glorious exaltation. Man cannot defeat God. The Resurrection is in view.

Ver. 43. *Therefore*. This would naturally follow ver. 41. There does not seem to be any clear connection with ver. 42. *taken from you*. Not as though they actually possessed it, but as the privileged representatives and natural heirs of it. The Kingdom of God is probably used here instead of the Kingdom of the Heavens, because what is taken from them is the privileged position of being under the present sovereignty of God, of being the people of God and the natural heirs of the kingdom to come. *nation*. The new Christian people of God, composed of Jewish and Gentile elements, as opposed to the ancient Jewish people of God, represented by the Rulers addressed. *bringing forth the fruits*. Fulfilling the duties of their vocation (cf. ver. 34).

Ver. 44. The connection of this verse with the preceding is not clear. Found in Luke xx. 18, it may be an interpolation here. *whosoever . . . broken*. Stumbling on the stone lying in the way (Isa. viii. 14, 15), due to short-sightedness, want of intelligence. They are broken but not destroyed by the sudden fall. The stone is Christ (cf. xi. 6). *on whomsoever*, etc. From Dan. ii. 34, 44, 45, where the stone rolls down from the mountain. It speaks of the active opposition of Christ. He is not a mere passive sufferer. *grind . . . powder*. Rather, "scatter him as dust." Of the dust which rises and is blown away, when the stone falls and pulverises him

46 parables, they perceived that he spake of them. But when they sought to lay hands on him, they feared the multitude, because they took him for a prophet.

—absolute destruction and disappearance. The reference is probably to the destruction of the Jewish State.

XXII. 1-14. THE PARABLE OF THE WEDDING FEAST—INDIFFERENCE EXCLUDES AND IRREVERENCE EXPELS FROM THE KINGDOM.

1 AND Jesus answered and spake unto them again by parables,  
2 and said, The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king,  
3 which made a marriage for his son, and sent forth his servants  
to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they  
4 would not come. Again, he sent forth other servants, saying,  
Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my  
dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things

A varying form of the parable is given in Luke xiv. 16-24. Matthew has probably added vers. 6, 7 to the original form of the parable, and vers. 11-13 may be part of another parable which Matthew has attached to this parable. Vers. 1-5, 8-10 tell how the ruling classes, through their indifference to the call of God, have lost the promised privilege of entering the Messianic kingdom, which has been transferred to the masses of the people. Vers. 11-13 warn these masses that as indifference shuts a man out, so irreverence will expel a man. It is not enough to respond to the invitation of God. The feast cannot be enjoyed unless one does God's will and pleases Him. The spirit of the guest must be in harmony with the spirit of the Host.

Ver. 1. *answered and spake.* A regular formula, an answer to the mood expressed in xxi. 46. *them.* The chief priests and Pharisees (cf. xxi. 45). *by parables.* Parabolically, not implying necessarily more than one parable at a time.

Ver. 2. *The kingdom of heaven*—i.e. the coming Messianic kingdom. *a marriage*—"a marriage feast." For the idea of the Messiah as a bridegroom cf. ix. 15, Rev. xxi. 2. A feast is a familiar way of depicting the social joy of the Messianic kingdom to come. *son*=the Messiah, Christ.

Ver. 3. *servants.* Some think the prophets are in view, but it is best taken of the ministry of John, who preached of the near arrival of the kingdom, calling those who had already been bidden by the prophets. *to call.* The second invitation, the time not being specified in the first.

Ver. 4. *other servants.* Best taken of Jesus and His disciples, who repeated John's call with more insistence on the immediacy and the grace of the kingdom. *dinner.* Here the midday meal. The commencement of the feast at noon and the extensive preparation indicate the splendour of the feast.

5 are ready: come unto the marriage. But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his  
 6 merchandise: and the remnant took his servants, and  
 7 entreated them spitefully, and slew them. But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their  
 8 city. Then saith he to his servants, 'The wedding is ready,  
 9 but they which were bidden were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to  
 10 the marriage. So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad  
 11 and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests. And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man  
 12 which had not on a wedding garment: and he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a

Ver. 5. *made light of it*—"neglected it." *his farm*. It was his own property. Those indifferent guests belong to the comfortable classes, and outside the parable the ruling classes, whether socially, politically, or intellectually.

Vers. 6, 7. *the remnant*—"the rest." But *they* in ver. 5 seems to cover all the guests, and the dispatch of armies seems outside the situation in the parable. These verses look like an addition by Matthew. There is nothing corresponding in Luke xiv. 16-23. The treatment of Jesus, Stephen, and James by the Jewish rulers, perhaps the prophets also, and the destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman armies, viewed as sent by God, in 70 A.D., are in view.

Vers. 8-10. *Then*. Most naturally connecting with ver. 5. *highways*. The places within the city where streets crossed and many people were to be found. The lower strata of the people, not the Gentiles, are in view. *bad and good*. Preparing for vers. 11-14. The servants invite all and sundry. It is not their business but the King's to make moral distinctions. *wedding was furnished*—"wedding-hall was filled."

Ver. 11. *to see*. Not to examine them, but as an interested spectator to enjoy the sight, the interest of a host delighted to see his guests. *a wedding garment*. In the parable, of which this was probably originally a part, there would have been time between the invitation and the feast for the guests to provide themselves with becoming garments. The thought that the guest might have been too poor to provide a suitable garment does not arise, neither is there any thought of the King's having provided garments for the guests. The garment symbolises that spirit of reverence, of personal holiness, which clothes a soul as character covers a man. Grace is free and joyous, but the feast is not to be partaken of by those who do not wear a spirit of becoming reverence. Love flies from the indecent.

Ver. 12. *Friend*. Half kindly, half reproachful. *how*. Not in

- 13 wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be  
 14 weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen.

what way did you come in? but, how could you have done it? Amazement ready to break out in indignation, but waiting in kindly patience for an explanation, though not expecting that there is one. *speechless*. The helpless stupefaction of one who suddenly realises the consequences of his action, who is convicted of wrong and has no defence to offer.

Ver. 13. The Oriental was extremely sensitive to matters of ceremonial. This was felt to be a personal insult to the King. *Bind . . . teeth*. The allegory is here broken through. It is not a description of what an Oriental king would do, but of the punishment on the day of judgment (cf. notes on viii. 12, xiii. 42). The *servants*—not the word for “slaves,” as in the preceding verses, but “ministers”—are probably to be regarded as the angels.

Ver. 14. This saying, whether the conclusion of vers. 1-13 or of vers. 11-13, whether an original part of the parable or a saying of Jesus appended here by Matthew, expresses the idea, underlying the whole parable, that, compared with the many who are invited, few fulfil the ethical conditions which secure participation in the future kingdom. *chosen* does not mean choice, as though those who were not choice might still be in the kingdom; neither is there any thought of the theological doctrine of predestination. It describes the selection at the last of those who have fulfilled the requisite conditions for entrance into the future kingdom (cf. notes on ver. 11, vii. 13, 14, xxiv. 12; Luke xiii. 23, 24).

## XXII. 15-22. THE QUESTION OF TRIBUTE.

- 15 Then went the Pharisees, and took counsel how they might  
 16 entangle him in his talk. And they sent out unto him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man; for thou regardest not the person

Vers. 15, 16. *in his talk*—“in argument.” *their disciples*. The question would look an innocent inquiry coming from young scholars. *Herodians*. As supporters of King Herod, they were opponents of the democratic Pharisees, the national party; but now they combine with the Pharisees in an effort to get rid of Jesus, whom Herod feared. *Master*—“Rabbi.” *the way of God*—i.e. the manner of life and conduct agreeable to God’s will. *carest . . . men*. In their flattery they lay special emphasis on His fearless outspokenness, to tempt Him to commit Himself on the question.

17 of men. Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it  
 18 lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar, or not? But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye me, ye  
 19 hypocrites? Show me the tribute money. And they  
 20 brought unto him a penny. And he saith unto them,  
 21 Whose is this image and superscription? They say unto him, Cæsar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's; and unto God the  
 22 things that are God's. When they had heard these words, they marvelled, and left him, and went their way.

Ver. 17. *lawful*—i.e. from the religious point of view. *or not*. They wish a definite answer to a definite question. If He said yes, He would go against the sensitive popular feeling, and the people would lose faith in Him as the Messiah. If He said no, which was the Pharisaic view, they would denounce Him to the Roman authorities. It was against the paying of tribute that Judas (Acts v. 37) raised an insurrection.

Ver. 18. *wickedness*. Because actuated by pure malice. *tempt*. He sees through their flattery. *hypocrites*. Because they pretended to be searchers after truth.

Vers. 19, 20. *the tribute money*. The tribute could only be paid in Roman coins. *penny*. The Roman denarius, a silver coin. *image*. The Romans, in consideration of Jewish religious feelings, circulated in Palestine coins without the image of Cæsar on them; but foreign Jews, present at the Passover, would have the regular coins.

Ver. 21. *the things . . . Cæsar's*. The denarius with Cæsar's image stamped on it declares itself to be Cæsar's. Jesus distinguishes between the realm of politics and the realm of religion. Cæsar being the political ruler, a man has duties to him as his political subject, but he has also duties to God as His spiritual subject. When they clash, it is obvious that the duties to God are supreme; but Jesus does not define the limits of Cæsar's rule, as He does not enter into the question of the origin or right of Cæsar's power. He simply accepts the Roman supremacy as a present fact. As the Messiah, He does not decide political or social questions (cf. Luke xii. 13-15). He keeps to His own vocation, which moves entirely in the region of the personal, the ethical, and spiritual.

Ver. 22. *marvelled*. At the way he eluded the trap set for Him.

## XXII. 23-33. THE QUESTION OF THE RESURRECTION.

23 The same day came to him the Sadducees, which say that  
 24 there is no resurrection, and asked him, saying, Master,

Vers. 23-25. *The same day*. The day begun (xxi. 18). *Sadducees*. Cf. Appendix, Note A. *Master*—“Rabbi,” “Teacher.” *said*.

Moses said, If a man die, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother.  
 25 Now there were with us seven brethren : and the first, when he had married a wife, deceased, and, having no issue, left  
 26 his wife unto his brother : likewise the second also, and the  
 27 third, unto the seventh. And last of all the woman died  
 28 also. Therefore in the resurrection whose wife shall she  
 29 be of the seven ? for they all had her. Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor  
 30 the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of  
 31 God in heaven. But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by  
 32 God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob ? God is not the God of the  
 33 dead, but of the living. And when the multitude heard this, they were astonished at his doctrine.

Deut. xxv. 5, combined with Gen. xxxviii. 8. *with us*. As though it were an actual case, which is very improbable.

Ver. 28. *whose wife*. In the Talmud the difficulty is solved by assigning her to her first husband ! The Sadducees seek to discredit Jesus by showing the absurdity of the belief in a resurrection of the dead, which they knew that Jesus held.

Ver. 29. Jesus answers seriously the frivolous casuistical question. *the Scriptures*—which, though not definitely teaching the resurrection of the dead, imply it, as in ver. 32. *the power of God*. His power to make a life which solves such difficulties.

Ver. 30. The future life is not a simple continuation and repetition of the present, but a new state of being resembling the life of the angels. Jesus does not teach the sexlessness of the future life, but the absence of marriage. *in heaven*—i.e. they are in heaven as the angels of God are.

Vers. 31, 32. As ver. 30 showed the nature of the risen life made by the power of God, so now Jesus shows that the fact of the resurrection is implied in a true understanding of the Scriptures. *read*. In Ex. iii. 6. *am*. Not in the Hebrew, but taken from the LXX. The argument turns on the personal relation of God to Abraham and the others. God can have no relation to the non-existent. He could not define Himself as the God of Abraham unless Abraham were living. The two must be living before there can be a personal relationship between them.



XXII. 34-40. THE QUESTION OF THE GREAT  
COMMANDMENT.

34 But when the Pharisees had heard that he had put the  
 35 Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together. Then  
 one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question,  
 36 tempting him, and saying, Master, which is the great  
 37 commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt  
 love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy  
 38 soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great  
 39 commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt  
 40 love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments  
 hang all the Law and the Prophets.

Vers. 34, 35. *the Pharisees*. No doubt with a secret pleasure in the discomfiture of their natural opponents, though temporarily allies. The Pharisees will now try to score a victory. *gathered together*. In the words of Ps. ii. 2, LXX, indicating the anti-Messianic spirit of their gathering. *lawyer*—a scribe well informed in the law.

Ver. 36. *Master*. Rabbi, Teacher. *the great commandment*. Rather, "which (or what kind of) commandment is great in the law?" The scribes reckoned up 613 commandments in the law. There were controversies as to which were great and small (cf. v. 19). The scribe is asking either what kind of commandment is to be considered in the class of great; or better, what particular commandment is to be put above all. The need for a unifying ruling principle had already been felt. Rabbi Hillel had answered the question by making the golden rule, in a negative form, the summary of the law. "What is hateful to thee, do not do to thy neighbour. That is the whole law. All else is commentary upon it."

Vers. 37-40. Jesus' special originality lies in His combining Deut. vi. 5 and Lev. xix. 18, the love of God and the love of neighbour, making the latter a derivative of the former and a form of its expression. Among the Pharisaic legalists the love of the law had taken the place of the personal love of God, and had ousted the human love of neighbour.

*heart . . . mind*—i.e. with the whole inner being. *first and great*. Better, "great and first"=great and indeed great *par excellence*, the first. The love of God is primary with Jesus. It is the root of which love to man is the fruit.

*the second . . . it*. Better, "a second similar is this." *neighbour*. Cf. n. on v. 43. *as thyself*. The love we feel towards ourselves, though not a perfect standard, is the best by which to measure the degree of love due to our neighbours (cf. vii. 12). *hang*—i.e. are derived from these two principles.

## XXII. 41-46. THE QUESTION OF THE MESSIAH.

41 While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked  
 42 them, saying, What think ye of Christ? whose son is he?  
 43 They say unto him, The son of David. He saith unto them,  
 44 How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, The  
 Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I  
 45 make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then call him  
 46 Lord, how is he his son? And no man was able to answer  
 him a word; neither durst any man from that day forth ask  
 him any more questions.

Vers. 41, 42. Jesus takes the offensive to end these controversial attacks. *Christ*—"the Messiah." *The son of David*. The universal belief.

Vers. 43, 44. *in spirit*. By inspiration. *David*. Regarded as the author of Ps. cx. *thy footstool*—"underneath thy feet."

Ver. 45. Jesus does not answer the question. He does not here deny that the Messiah is David's son, but implies that He is more. It is His relationship to God, not the Davidic descent, which constitutes Jesus the Messiah (cf. notes on xvi. 16).

## XXIII. 1-39. THE GREAT DISCOURSE AGAINST THE PHARISEES.

## XXIII. 1-12. AVOIDANCE OF THE PHARISAIC SPIRIT.

1 THEN spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples,  
 2 saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat:  
 3 all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe  
 and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and

Ver. 1. Jesus continues the offensive begun xxii. 41-46, but the discourse is addressed to the multitude and the Twelve, with the Pharisees perhaps in the background. The sayings grouped here may not have been all spoken on this occasion (cf. Luke xi. 37-39, 43, 46, and xx. 45, 46).

Ver. 2. *sit in Moses' seat*. The followers of a Rabbi were spoken of as sitting in his seat, i.e. continuing his teaching. The Jewish teacher sat (cf. v. 1).

Ver. 3. Jesus is wont to make unqualified statements which are balanced by other statements (cf. v. 18). Qualification is necessary in view of xv. 3-14, xvi. 6. But it is their practice, not their teaching, which Jesus here criticises. *say, and do not*. The charge can hardly be that they do not endeavour to follow their own teaching (they rigidly observed their rules), but rather that by their atomistic

4 do not. For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments, and love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi. But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth: for system, lost in a multitude of details, lacking in perspective, and void of the right spirit, they do not in practice show that honour of the Mosaic law, of the O.T. revelation, which in their teaching they profess and demand.

Ver. 4. Omit, following the best authorities, *and grievous to be borne. bind*. By their endless minute and complicated regulations they make the law a burden, which was meant to be the guide and help of life, the remover of burdens. *move them*—i.e. "move away," "remove." They do not make the slightest attempt to lighten them when they see how men are bowed under them.

Ver. 5. Their motive is not love, which seeks to help men, but selfish ostentation (cf. vi. 1, 2, 5, 16). *phylacteries*. Two small leather cases, worn on the forehead and on the left arm opposite the heart, kept in position by leather straps. Inside of these cases were slips of parchment on which were written Ex. xiii. 1-16, Deut. vi. 4-9, xi. 13-21, the passages which were supposed to enjoin the wearing of the phylacteries. In Hebrew they were called Tephillin = prayers; in Greek, phylacteries = amulets, charms, as they came to be superstitiously regarded as possessing a mystic power to protect the wearer against the influence of evil spirits. *borders of their garments* (cf. n. on ix. 20). To make broad the phylacteries and enlarge the tassels was a sign of special holiness, of ardent devotion to the law. This ostentatious piety was offensive to Jesus.

Ver. 6. The same spirit showed itself in a love of distinction both at social gatherings and in the synagogue. *the uppermost rooms*—"the chief seats," which were at the head of the table. There were also seats of honour in the synagogue.

Ver. 7. *greetings*. The ordinary salutations, loved because they drew public attention to them. *Rabbi*—lit. "my great one," like monsieur; a title given to the learned in the law, translated "Teacher" by the evangelists. Compare our use of "Doctor."

Vers. 8-12. Addressed to the Twelve, warning them against the spirit which seeks and loves the outward distinctions of titles.

Ver. 8. *Master*—"Teacher." Delete "even Christ," though that is the meaning. *brethren*. On the one level of brothers, one of whom does not set himself above, nor look down on, the other.

Ver. 9. *father*. The highest title of spiritual respect, given to a

- 10 one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called  
 11 masters : for one is your Master, even Christ. But he that  
 12 is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever  
 shall exalt himself shall be abased ; and he that shall humble  
 himself shall be exalted.

prophet (2 Kings ii. 12) and commonly to the men of the past. To Jesus it is too sacred a word to be given to any but God.

Ver. 10. *masters*. Better, "leaders," "guides," *i.e.* spiritual leaders. *even Christ*. The correct reading here, though not in ver. 8. But it is likely an addition by the evangelist, as Jesus is not wont to call Himself directly the Messiah. That is, however, the meaning. Jesus reserves to Himself the spiritual leadership of each soul, which secures to each freedom and independence from the other. For the spiritual domination of one man by another Jesus substitutes the service of brother love (ver. 11 : cf. xx. 26, 27) and personal humility (ver. 12 : cf. xviii. 4).

### XXIII. 13-31. THE SEVEN WOES.

- 13 But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites ! for ye  
 shut up the kingdom of heaven against men : for ye neither  
 go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to  
 14 go in. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites ! for  
 ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long  
 prayer : therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation.  
 15 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites ! for ye  
 compass sea and land to make one proselyte ; and when he

Ver. 13. FIRST WOE, AGAINST PRODUCING SPIRITUAL INSUSCEPTIBILITY.

*hypocrites*. As ver. 3. *shut up*. The doors of the kingdom conceived as a palace (cf. xvi. 19, xviii. 18). *suffer . . . in*. By their teaching they darkened instead of illuminating the truth, and made the people who were on the point of entering unresponsive to the message of Christ.

Ver. 14. AGAINST AVARICE.—This verse, omitted in the best MSS, has come in from Mark xii. 40. By making widows pay for their intercessory prayers, or in some other way, they screwed money out of these defenceless and probably poor women. *pretence*. Their real motive being money. *greater damnation*. A severer judgment on the day of judgment. Avarice and inhumanity, under a cloak of religious zeal, exploiting the weak was specially revolting to Jesus.

Ver. 15. SECOND WOE, AGAINST FANATICAL PARTY-SPIRIT.  
*compass . . . land*. Probably simply a proverbial expression for burning zeal. *proselyte*. Not to Judaism generally, but to Pharisaism,

is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than  
 16 yourselves. Woe unto you, ye blind guides, which say,  
 Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but  
 whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a  
 17 debtor! Ye fools, and blind! for whether is greater, the  
 18 gold, or the temple that sanctifies the gold? And, Whoso-  
 ever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing; but whosoever  
 19 sweareth by the gift that is upon it, he is guilty. Ye fools,  
 and blind! for whether is greater, the gift, or the altar that  
 20 sanctifieth the gift? Whoso therefore shall swear by the  
 21 altar, sweareth by it, and by all things thereon. And  
 whoso shall swear by the temple, sweareth by it, and by him  
 22 that dwelleth therein. And he that shall swear by heaven,  
 sweareth by the throne of God, and by him that sitteth  
 23 thereon. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!  
 for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have  
 omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy,  
 and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave  
 24 the other undone. Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat,

their motive being apparently zeal for the welfare of the soul, but in reality fanatical party-spirit. *twofold*. Twice as fanatically perverted. *the child of hell*=belonging to, and destined for hell (cf. n. on viii. 12).

Vers. 16-22. THIRD WOE, AGAINST THE CASUISTICAL DISTINCTION OF OATHS PERVERTING THE CONSCIENCE. Cf. v. 33-37.

*blind*. Without spiritual insight. *it is nothing*—i.e. not valid. *gold*. Either the golden ornaments of the temple or the gold in its treasury. *is a debtor*—"is bound by his oath." *fools*. Stupidity, intellectual and moral. *is guilty*—"is bound by his oath." It is the altar and the temple which make all the accessories holy, and they are holy solely because of their relation to God. Every oath resting on that relation to God must be equally valid.

Vers. 23, 24. FOURTH WOE, AGAINST WANT OF MORAL PERSPECTIVE.

The law of tithe, which in the O.T. applied only to the main crops—corn, oil, wine, and fruit—was extended by their scrupulous zeal to such small garden herbs as mint, dill, and cummin.

*weightier*. Of greater importance. They were also more difficult to fulfil, but their neglect of them was due to their absorption with petty details, which drove the weightier matters into the background of their vision. *judgment, mercy, faith* (cf. Mic. vi. 8). The essentials of O.T. religion. The words are to be taken in the O.T. sense. *Judgment*=the practice of justice between man and man, especially the righting of the wronged, the poor, etc. *Mercy*=merciful loving-kindness with the idea of personal loyalty to the object of affection. *Faith*=fidelity to truth in the whole conduct of life (Hab. ii. 4). *strain at* (=out)

- 25 and swallow a camel. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess.
- 26 Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also.
- 27 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.
- 29 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres
- 30 of the righteous, and say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in
- 31 the blood of the prophets. Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets.

*a gnat.* The metaphor is taken from straining wine to remove the small insect which had fallen into it, because it was unclean to a Jew. *swallow a camel*—an Oriental hyperbole (cf. xix. 24).

Vers. 25, 26. FIFTH WOE, AGAINST MERE EXTERNAL PURITY. *make clean.* Of ceremonial cleanness, attained by following the prescribed rules about washing. *cup.* For wine. *platter.* The dish on which viands were set. *full of . . . excess*—i.e. the contents are the proceeds of rapacity and wantonness, immoral gains. *cleanse first*=see that your gains are morally obtained. Ethical purity makes the outward and material pure.

Vers. 27, 28. SIXTH WOE, AGAINST PERSONAL EXTERNALISM. *whited.* On the 15th of the month Adar graves were whitewashed with chalk or lime. This gave them an appearance of beauty, though the intention was not to beautify them but to mark them out so that no one might unwittingly touch them and be ceremonially unclean. *iniquity*—"lawlessness," "immorality."

Vers. 29-31. SEVENTH WOE, AGAINST MERE OUTWARD REVERENCE FOR THE PAST.

*build the tombs*—i.e. build monumental tombstones. *witnesses unto yourselves.* They meant "our fathers" in a physical sense; Jesus ironically makes it fathers in spirit. You confess you have inherited their murderous spirit, and carry on the work of building tombs which they had begun by killing the prophets.

### XXIII. 32-36. PERORATION.

- 32 Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. Ye serpents,

Ver. 32. *Fill . . . measure.* Deadly earnest. Either "sin to the

33 ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of  
 34 hell? Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and  
 wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and  
 crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your syna-  
 35 gogues, and persecute them from city to city: that upon you  
 may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from  
 the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son  
 of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the  
 36 altar. Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come  
 upon this generation.

same degree as they sinned," or, not so good, "complete what they left incomplete," and make the measure of guilt full, ripe for judgment.

Ver. 33. Cf. iii. 7, xii. 34. It is impossible to escape, and therefore there is nothing to be said but ver. 32. *the damnation of hell*. The sentence which condemns you to Gehenna.

Ver. 34. *Wherefore*. Connecting with ver. 32, or better with vers. 29-31. *I*. Luke xi. 49 has, "Therefore also said the wisdom of God, I will send," which looks like a quotation from some unknown book. Matthew makes them the words of Jesus. Probably they are a quotation which Jesus used, identifying Himself with the Wisdom of God. *prophets . . . scribes*. Under this Jewish classification of religious leaders the new Christian missionaries are described. *crucify*. Through the Romans, who reserved the right to inflict capital punishment.

Ver. 35. *that . . . come*. The consequence resulting from their action, viewed as the realisation of the Divine purpose. *upon you*. The scribes and Pharisees, as the leaders and representatives of the people, responsible for their misdeeds. *all . . . blood—i.e.* the punishment for the blood. *Abel . . . Zacharias*. Summing up the whole past from Genesis to Chronicles, the last book in the Jewish canon of the O.T. *son of Barachias*. Zechariah (2 Chron. xxiv. 22), whose last word was, "The Lord look upon it and require it," was the son of Jehoiada. He is confused with Zechariah the prophet (Zech. i. 1) by Matthew. *ye slew*. As one with their fathers, or it might point to a confusion, in the mind of the evangelist, of the Zechariah of 2 Chron. with Zechariah the son of Baruch, slain in the Temple court two years before the destruction of Jerusalem (Jos. Bell. iv. v. 4). *temple and the altar—i.e.* the inner shrine and the altar of burnt-offering.

### XXIII. 37-39. LAMENT OVER THE DOOM OF JERUSALEM.

37 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and

Ver. 37. *killlest the prophets*. Only one prophet, Urijah (Jer. xxvi. 20-23), was actually killed in Jerusalem, but Jerusalem is

stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth  
 38 her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold,  
 39 your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you,  
 Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

here regarded as the centre of the land and all its history. *how often*. A sign, according to some, of frequent visits to Jerusalem by Jesus; but that is not a necessary inference. This address to Jerusalem is regarded by some as a continuation of the quotation begun in ver. 34. In that case—and it is probably correct—Jesus identifies Himself with the Wisdom of God in all His efforts in history to win and save Israel. The heart of Wisdom is here lamenting. *gathered*. As a refuge from danger. *thy children*. The dwellers in the city; but the whole people are meant, Jerusalem being the impersonation of Israel. *would not*—*i.e.* be gathered under the protection of Christ, the Wisdom of God—the pathos of a rejected love, that would and could have saved.

Ver. 38. *your house*. Most likely the city, though it might be the temple. But vers. 37-39 were probably spoken originally in another situation. Luke xiii. 34, 35 places the saying in Galilee, and “your house” perhaps originally applied to the whole State, viewed as a family living in one house. *left . . . desolate*. The better authorities omit “desolate.” “Left unto you”=left to your own care, which spells doom. The presence and protection of Christ, carrying with Him the presence and protection of God, are now withdrawn. Jesus speaks in saddest sorrow.

Ver. 39. *till . . . Lord*. The Messianic acclamation of Ps. cxviii. 26. The reference might be to the triumphant Messianic entry into Jerusalem (cf. xxi. 9; Luke xix. 38), but here it seems to refer to the eschatological coming of the Son of Man, carrying judgment with it. It might, however, simply mean “till you recognise me as the Messiah.” If they should recognise Him as the Messiah, they would see Him again, a gracious, loving, protecting Presence. If not, then never.

## XXIV.-XXV. DISCOURSE ON THE LAST THINGS.

### XXIV. 1-3. PROPHECY OF THE DESTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE.

1 AND Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him, for to show him the buildings of

Ver. 1. *went out*—*i.e.* out of the temple. *departed . . . temple*. Never again to enter it. He had been teaching in the temple. His ministry was over. *to show . . . buildings*. To draw His attention to the imposing spectacle of the pile of temple buildings, turrets, and courts, which glanced white.



- 2 the temple. And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? Verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.
- 3 And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?

Ver. 2. It is not the gorgeous spectacle which strikes Jesus, but the impending doom. *one . . . another*. Titus levelled the temple to the ground.

Ver. 3. Jesus walked on till He reached the Mount of Olives, where He sat and looked back on the city below. *privately*. It is not to be supposed that any but the Twelve accompanied Him. *Privately* is taken from Mark xiii. 3, where four of the Twelve draw apart from the rest. *these things*—*i.e.* the destruction of the temple (ver. 2), the only question in the mind of the disciples, according to Mark. *thy coming*—"thy presence," the technical apostolic term for the Second Advent of Christ, found only in this chapter of Matthew among the Synoptics. Matthew has added this to Mark xiii. 4, thus making them anticipate Jesus' communication of the idea to them in ver. 30. *the end of the world*—"the consummation of the age," *i.e.* of the pre-Messianic order of things. It is also a technical eschatological term put by Matthew into the mouth of the disciples, because, in the following discourse, the Second Advent and the Consummation of the Age are bound up with the fall of Jerusalem.

#### XXIV. 4-8. EVENTS PRECEDING THE END.

- 4 And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying,
- 5 I am Christ; and shall deceive many. And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all

Ver. 4. *deceive you*—"lead you astray." The motive of the whole discourse is not to give signs from which the end can be inferred, but to guard the disciples from error and anxiety.

Ver. 5. PSEUDO-CHRISTS.—*in my name*. Claiming the Messianic authority which belongs to Jesus. *Christ*—"the Messiah." False Messiahs did not actually appear before the destruction of Jerusalem, but the Jewish revolts were due to the Messianic hope.

Ver. 6. WARS.—*shall hear*—lit. "shall be about to hear," emphasising their imminence. *rumours of wars*—*i.e.* of distant wars outside Palestine. Others take it, not so well, of merely threatened

these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.  
 7 For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against  
 kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and  
 8 earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning  
 of sorrows.

wars. *all these things*. Simply "they" = wars. *must*. In the nature of things, by the Divine Will. *end*. The end of the pre-Messianic order of things. Jewish fanaticism was always prone to think that the end had come when there were great political convulsions.

Ver. 7. CONVULSIONS AMONG NATIONS AND IN NATURE.—There were famines and earthquakes before the fall of Jerusalem, but we need not particularly think of these and similar details. For apocalyptic descriptions are not a prediction of details, as they historically happen. They describe only the general course of events.

Ver. 8. *the beginning of sorrows*—lit. "birth-pangs." In Jewish apocalyptic literature the strains and troubles preceding the coming of the Messiah were called "the pangs of the Messiah."

#### XXIV. 9-14. THE STRAIN UPON CHRISTIANS BEFORE THE END.

9 Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill  
 you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's  
 10 sake. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray  
 11 one another, and shall hate one another. And many false

Ver. 9. PERSECUTION OF CHRISTIANS.—This verse is Mark xiii. 9b, 11-13a condensed, with those parts omitted which have already been inserted in x. 17-22. *they*. Probably the Jews. *you*. The thought passes beyond the Twelve to Christians whom they represent. *kill you*. Not implying that every one will be killed. It is a fate in store for Christians (cf. xxiii. 34). *all nations*. Instead of Mark's "all men," to denote pagan persecution. The pagans charged the Jews with cherishing "hatred of the human race," and repaid them with hate. This charge and this hate were transferred to the Christians, who were at first confused with the Jews.

Ver. 10. APOSTASY AND TREACHERY AMONG CHRISTIANS.—*offended*—"made to stumble," *i.e.* into unbelief, under the strain. *one another*. The apostate Christians will betray the faithful. But the hate, if not the treachery, was too often in the early ages mutual.

Ver. 11. FALSE PROPHETS WITHIN THE CHRISTIAN FOLD.—Cf. n. on vii. 15. *deceive*—"lead astray."

- 12 prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because  
 13 iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But  
 he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.  
 14 And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the  
 world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end  
 come.

Vers. 12, 13. COOLING OF THE FERVOUR OF LOVE.—*iniquity*—“lawlessness.” The antinomian tendency divorcing religion from ethics, grace from law, was the cause of much moral disorder among the early Christians. *of many*—*i.e.* who remain Christians. *wax cold*. The effect of the teaching of the false prophets, with the resulting lawlessness. Cf. Rev. ii. 4, where, though the false apostles have been found out, the chill on the heart remains.

*endure*. As opposed to the apostasy of ver. 10, bearing trouble patiently and holding to the faith, even though the love be chilled. *unto the end*. The end of the present order, which will be the end of the tribulation. *saved*. Brought safely through, his life preserved, as in xvi. 25. Cf. x. 22, where the context makes the meaning slightly different.

Ver. 14. PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL IN ALL THE WORLD.—*this*. Of which Matthew tells. *of the kingdom*. Simply defining the gospel, which is a message about the kingdom. *all the world*. Not to be limited, the whole known world. The outlook is here wider than in x. 23, and the end farther off, due, perhaps, to the missionary experience of the Church. *and then*. As the last event preceding. *end*. As in ver. 13.

#### XXIV. 15-22. THE TRIBULATION AT THE END.

- 15 When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation,  
 spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place,

Ver. 15. *therefore*. Picking up the connection with ver. 8, to which the mention of the end (ver. 14) has brought back the thought after the digression of vers. 9-14. *the abomination of desolation*. From Dan. xii. 11, where it refers to an idol altar erected on the Altar of Burnt-Offering to the Olympian Zeus by the Syrian king, Antiochus Epiphanes. A similar occurrence may be thought of here, or the meaning may be vague. Luke xxi. 20 makes it the destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman Army. *the holy place*. Probably the temple, as in Acts vi. 13, though it might be the Holy Land. *whoso . . . understand*. Taken from Mark xiii. 14, inserted by Mark into the discourse or subsequently inserted for church purposes. It calls on the reader either to note the sign, which indicates the time to flee, or to consider the meaning of the abomination of desolation, implying either a reference to Dan. xii. 11, or to the destruction of Jerusalem.

16 (whoso readeth, let him understand,) then let them which be  
 17 in Judæa flee into the mountains: let him which is on the  
 house-top not come down to take any thing out of his house:  
 18 neither let him which is in the field return back to take his  
 19 clothes. And woe unto them that are with child, and to  
 20 them that give suck, in those days! But pray ye that your  
 21 flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day: for  
 then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the  
 beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.  
 22 And except those days should be shortened, there should no  
 flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be  
 shortened.

Ver. 16. *them*=Christians. *Judæa*. Including those in Jerusalem, the centre of the conflict. Eusebius says that the Christians fled to Pella.

Ver. 17. This and the following verses emphasise the need for immediate flight. No time to carry away household goods. He must flee for his life along the flat roofs of the neighbouring houses.

Vers. 18, 19. *clothes*—"his upper garment," which the field-labourer leaves at home. *woe*. Because maternity and maternal duties will impede their flight and increase their tribulation. Sympathy with women is characteristic of Jesus.

Ver. 20. *on the sabbath*. Because of religious scruples. The journey allowed on the Sabbath did not exceed five or six furlongs. This is an addition by Matthew to Mark. A strong Jewish colour is characteristic of the First Gospel. The Jewish Christians of Palestine held strictly to the Mosaic Law.

Vers. 21, 22. For ver. 21 cf. Dan. xii. 1. *those days*=the days of the siege. *shortened*. In number. *no flesh*—i.e. in Judæa (ver. 16). *for the elect's sake*. Lest they also should perish (cf. Gen. xviii. 23 ff.). Others take it of their intercession after their flight to the mountains. But it is the salvation of the elect, and the great difficulty they have in escaping, not the salvation of any others for their sakes, which is in view. The expression, "the elect" (=the saved remnant of Jews), is familiar in Jewish apocalyptic literature. Here it means the Christians.

#### XXIV. 23-28. FALSE CHRISTS.

23 Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or  
 24 there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and

Ver. 23. The distress at the end awakens longings among the Jews for the Messiah, the Deliverer, and fanatics will claim to know where He is. *Christ*. The Messiah as appearing for the first time, not of the return of Jesus.

Ver. 24. *false Christs*. Like Bar-Cochba in later times. *false*

false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders ; inso-  
 much that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very  
 25 elect. Behold, I have told you before. Wherefore, if they  
 26 shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert ; go not forth :  
 27 behold, he is in the secret chambers ; believe it not. For as  
 the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto  
 the west : so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.  
 28 For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be  
 gathered together.

*prophets.* Not Christians but Jews, men who either, as in Jeremiah's day, preached hope and deliverance when there were none, or proclaimed the advent of these false Christs. *great signs.* To prove their claims (cf. Deut. xiii. 1-3 ; Acts viii. 9-11). *the very elect—i.e.* the Christians.

Ver. 26. *he*=the Messiah. *desert.* Where Moses, Amos, the Baptist came from, where religious movements in Israel so often arose. *the secret chambers.* Of a house in the city. In both cases the Messiah is on the earth, but hidden.

Ver. 27. The coming (here=the return) of the Son of Man, the true Messiah, Jesus, will be as sudden and as universally visible as the lightning flashing from east to west. It will not be a local revelation.

Ver. 28. A proverbial saying (cf. Job ix. 36, xxxix. 30). Here, when evil has reached its climax, and corrupt Israel is like a dead body, judgment will fall, *i.e.* through the coming of the Son of Man and His angels in judgment, as xxv. 31. He will come not as the expected Deliverer of vers. 23-26, but as a judge. *wheresoever.* Judgment will fall not merely on the heathen, as the Jews expected, but wherever there is ethical corruption, on Israel as well. The eagles might represent the Roman Army, but not in this context.

#### XXIV. 29-31. THE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN.

29 Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens

Ver. 29. *Immediately.* Matthew has bound up the end of the world with the fall of Jerusalem and the temple (cf. n. on ver. 3), and hence he makes the coming of the Son of Man to follow immediately after this tribulation. *the sun . . . be shaken.* These are the familiar prophetic and apocalyptic terms which describe the coming of the Day of the Lord or any manifestation of Divine power (cf. Isa. xiii. 10 ; Joel iii. 15, etc.). To the prophets they were probably in essence symbolic representations, but they did not distinguish clearly between the symbol and the thing symbolised. It is hardly

- 30 shall be shaken: and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the  
 31 clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

to be supposed that the evangelist did not understand them literally as a physical catastrophe, the end of the present order of the physical world. *the stars shall fall.* The stars were regarded as fixed in the firmament (cf. Gen. i. 14). *the powers of the heavens*—i.e. the hosts of stars. *shaken.* Of the confused movements of the stars after they have fallen, i.e. been detached from their fixed places.

Ver. 30. *the sign of the Son of man.* Either corresponding to ver. 3, some phenomenon—e.g. an appearance of light—heralding His coming, or more likely, with reference to Dan. vii. 13, the sign which is the Son of Man. *tribes . . . mourn.* Derived, like Rev. i. 7, from Zech. xii. 12, 14. The mourning is due either to penitence for their sins, as in Zechariah, or to fear of judgment, possibly both. *see . . . glory.* From Dan. vii. 13, influenced by Zech. xii. 10. Cf. Ps. civ. 3, where the clouds are Jehovah's chariot.

Ver. 31. *with . . . trumpet.* Better, "with a great trumpet," i.e. to sound it as a signal to the elect. So in Isa. xxvii. 13, the scattered exiles are summoned at the call of a great trumpet. *gather together.* Out of the wreck of the world. *from the four winds*—i.e. the four quarters of the earth. *from one . . . other*=from one end of the earth to the other, the heavens being regarded as resting on the ends of the earth (cf. Deut. xxx. 4; Ps. xix. 6).

#### XXIV. 32-36. THE PARABLE OF THE FIG TREE.

- 32 Now learn a parable of the fig tree: When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is  
 33 nigh: so likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know  
 34 that it is near, even at the doors. Verily I say unto you, This

Ver. 32. The fig tree is the most appropriate symbol, because it was the commonest tree in Palestine which shed its leaves in winter, and was the last to break into new leaf. *tender.* Of the soft new bud. *summer.* They distinguished only between two seasons, winter and summer.

Ver. 33. *all these things.* The things before the coming of the Son of Man spoken of in the verses preceding ver. 29. *it*—i.e. the coming of the Son of Man. Luke takes it more generally of the coming of the kingdom. *at the doors.* Cf. Jas. v. 9; Rev. iii. 20.

Ver. 34. *you*=the disciples. *This generation.* The present

generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.  
 35 Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not  
 36 pass away. But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no,  
 not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.

generation contemporaneous with the disciples. *all these things*. As in ver. 33, but here including the coming of the Son of Man (vers. 29-31).

The destruction of the city and temple did take place within "this generation," but not the end of the world and the coming of the Son of Man, in the sense expected. But it remains uncertain how far the sayings of Christ on these subjects have been mingled and confused in this discourse, and, influenced perhaps by the prevailing eschatological notions of the early Christians, taken over in part from Jewish apocalyptic literature. Jesus must have expressed His prophetic outlook on the course of events in current eschatological terms. The essence of the discourse, however its component elements have been confused, goes back to Jesus. No one composing such a discourse long after 70 B.C. would have made the end of the world synchronise with the destruction of the city. The ultimate source which the evangelist followed must have been earlier than 70 B.C.

Ver. 35. *my words*. Applying to His words generally, including these eschatological sayings. *not pass away*—i.e. will be fulfilled (cf. v. 18).

Ver. 36. *that day*=the date of the coming of the Son of Man. The addition, "not even the Son," found in Mark might have been omitted by Matthew, who dislikes anything which seems to derogate from His Divine dignity; but it is found here in the best MSS, which most editors follow, and is presupposed by "my Father only."

#### XXIV. 37-42. THE UNCERTAINTY AND SUDDENNESS OF THE COMING.

37 But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the  
 38 Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the  
 flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving  
 39 in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and  
 knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so  
 40 shall also the coming of the Son of man be. Then shall two  
 be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

Vers. 37-39. As men lived a careless, worldly, pleasure-loving life in the days of Noah without the least expectation of the judgment of the Flood, so will they be living before the coming of the Son of Man. *knew not*. Had no expectation of a coming flood.

Vers. 40, 41. Men and women bound together in the closest

- 41 Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be  
 42 taken, and the other left. Watch therefore: for ye know not  
 what hour your Lord doth come.

association will be suddenly severed for ever for different fates. *two in the field*. Two men labouring together in the field, thinking only of their work. *at the mill*. Turning the handmill in the house, composed of two stones (cf. xviii. 6). Hard labour, looked upon as degrading, was laid upon women and slaves. *taken . . . left—i.e.* taken from judgment, as Noah was; left to the judgment, as those drowned in the Flood.

Ver. 42. *Watch*. Alert and attentive of soul, as opposed to the soul absorbed in the pleasures or cares of this world (Luke xxi. 34) and asleep to higher things.

#### XXIV. 43, 44. THE THIEF IN THE NIGHT—BE READY.

- 43 But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known  
 in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched,  
 and would not have suffered his house to be broken up.  
 44 Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think  
 not the Son of man cometh.

Ver. 43. *what watch*. The night was divided into four periods of time called watches. *the thief*. The judgment side of the coming of the Son of Man is here in view (cf. 1 Thess. v. 2, 4). *broken up—*“broken through.”

Ver. 44. *ready*. Of the man who is always doing the will of God, as ver. 46, xxv. 10 (cf. n. on ver. 42).

#### XXIV. 45-51. THE PARABLE OF THE TWO SERVANTS—TIME TRIETH TROTH.

- 45 Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath  
 made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due  
 46 season? Blessed is that servant whom his lord when he  
 47 cometh shall find so doing. Verily I say unto you, That he

Vers. 45-47. *Who*. A rhetorical question. The natural construction of vers. 45-47 would have been, “Who is . . . servant, whom his lord, if he shall find him so doing when he cometh, shall not make ruler over all his goods?”

*faithful and wise*. True to his trust and prudent in its discharge, the two chief characteristics of a good servant. *household*=domestic servants. *lord*. The servant's (=slave's) master. *cometh—i.e.* returneth from a presupposed journey. *so doing*. Doing what his lord instructed him to do, *i.e.* faithfully and wisely ruling over his house-



48 shall make him ruler over all his goods. But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to smite his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; the lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

hold, to give them meat in due season. *over all his goods.* The reward is promotion to the highest position of trust.

Vers. 48, 49. *that evil servant.* The same individual as in ver. 45, should he prove himself to be an evil instead of a faithful and wise servant. *delayeth.* The prolonged absence of the master leads to neglect of duty and demoralisation of character. *shall begin to smite.* Circumlocution for "shall smite," bringing out the idea of degenerating in character. Ill-treating the household instead of caring for them as he was instructed to do (ver. 45). Nothing wrong is suggested by eating and drinking of themselves (cf. xi. 9), but riotous excess is involved in "with the drunken." The cruelty and sensual lust result from the character demoralised by neglect of duty.

Ver. 51. *asunder*—"in two pieces," a gruesome form of death by sawing or otherwise. *appoint . . . hypocrites*=a place among the hypocrites, *i.e.* in hell, as is indicated by the weeping and gnashing of teeth, for which see n. on viii. 12. The earthly master of the parable has here become the Exalted Lord. The allegory breaks through the parable also in ver. 46 and vers. 48, 49, which depict the moral licence provoked by the delay in Christ's return (cf. 2 Pet. iii. 2-4; Luke xviii. 8).

## XXV. 1-13. THE PARABLE OF THE TEN VIRGINS—INSTANT READINESS TO OBEY THE CALL OF GOD.

1 THEN shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet

Ver. 1. *Then.* The time mentioned in chap. xxiv., when the Son of Man cometh. *ten.* A round number. *went forth.* The virgins are usually supposed to go forth from the house of the bride's parents, in which the marriage would be celebrated, to meet the procession of the bridegroom and his friends. It was unusual, however, for the marriage to be celebrated in the house of the bride's parents, and therefore some think that the bridegroom has gone to the bride's house to fetch her, and is now returning with her to his own house, and that the virgins are maid-servants of the bridegroom, who have gone forth from his house to meet him. But whichever house be the scene of the marriage, the virgins are most likely girl

2 the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were  
 3 foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took  
 4 no oil with them : but the wise took oil in their vessels with  
 5 their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered  
 6 and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold,  
 7 the bridegroom cometh ; go ye out to meet him. Then all  
 8 those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish  
 said unto the wise, Give us of your oil ; for our lamps are  
 9 gone out. But the wise answered, saying, Not so ; lest there  
 be not enough for us and you : but go ye rather to them that  
 10 sell, and buy for yourselves. And while they went to buy,  
 the bridegroom came ; and they that were ready went in with  
 11 him to the marriage : and the door was shut. Afterward

friends of the bride, and go from the house in which she is to meet the bridegroom and his friends.

*lamps.* These were saucer-shaped and shallow, and therefore, as they held little oil, they would soon require refilling.

Vers. 2-4. The equal division has no signification, any more than the oil and the lamps. The lesson lies in the wisdom and foolishness of the two sets of girls. *foolish.* Want of forethought, reflection, practical wisdom. *no oil with them*—i.e. no additional supply in vessels.

Vers. 5-7. *tarried.* An unexpected delay due to some unforeseen obstacle. *all . . . slept.* On the road, at the place appointed for meeting the bridegroom's procession. There is no fault in falling asleep. *a cry.* Who raised it, we are not told. The interest lies solely in its startling suddenness. *go ye out.* Perhaps they were asleep in a house by the wayside, but more likely it is simply the regular cry expressing the duty of the virgins.

Vers. 8, 9. *are gone out*—"are going out." *Not so . . . you.* Better, "There might not be enough for us and you"—a tender, apprehensive saying. The lamps of both of us might go out, and then there would be none to accompany him. The procession would then become a farce. *buy for yourselves.* The emphasis is on "buy," not on "for yourselves." Buying is not to be allegorised. There is nothing to buy from God. It is merely part of the story, illustrating the need for being ready. There was a chance, thought the wise, that they might return in time. It was a risk, but the only thing that could be done now. All thought of want of generosity on the part of the wise is outwith the situation.

Ver. 10. *while.* Just then ! The bridegroom was nearer, or came quicker, than even the wise had thought. *ready.* The word on which the parable turns. To be ready means here to be properly equipped. The foolish are only half-ready. *marriage*—"marriage feast."

Vers. 11, 12. *Afterward.* It was after the door was shut. Too

came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us.  
 12 But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you  
 13 not. Watch, therefore; for ye know neither the day nor the  
 hour wherein the Son of man cometh.

late! *Lord, Lord.* Addressed to the bridegroom. But here and in ver. 12 the spiritual breaks through the earthly story, the Bridegroom becomes the Lord Christ, and the scene is the day of judgment (cf. vii. 21-23).

*I know you not.* As not being members of the accompanying procession, who alone are entitled to enter the marriage feast. But really the meaning is, strangers to Christ, as not being members of His fellowship, who alone enter the kingdom of heaven.

Ver. 13. *Watch.* Not as opposed to sleeping (cf. n. on ver. 5), but to trusting to one's luck—the alert reflection which thoughtfully makes provision beforehand for all eventualities, and is therefore always ready at a moment's notice to obey the call of God (cf. xii. 42, 44).

#### XXV. 14-30. THE PARABLE OF THE TALENTS—THE USE OF LIFE DETERMINES DESTINY.

14 For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far  
 country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto  
 15 them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to  
 another two, and to another one; to every man according to  
 16 his several ability; and straightway took his journey. Then  
 he that had received the five talents went and traded with  
 17 the same, and made them other five talents. And likewise  
 18 he that had received two, he also gained other two. But he  
 that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid  
 19 his lord's money. After a long time the lord of those

Vers. 14-18. *For.* Connecting with ver. 13. *delivered.* Not as their property, but as a trust to be used in his interest. *his goods* = his capital, as the sequel shows. *talents.* A talent = £240. He entrusts his money to selected servants, leaving it to their own enterprise and discretion to decide how to employ it. It is presupposed, though not here stated, that the servants knew why the money was entrusted to them. *straightway* is better connected with ver. 16, indicating the zeal of the servant—"then straightway he," etc. *other five.* The 100 per cent. increase is to be regarded as the result of honest trading extending over the long period of the master's absence. *digged . . . money.* A common way in ancient times to keep money safely. But their master wanted his money increased as well as preserved.

Ver. 19. *long.* As the parable deals with the coming of the Son of Man, this word speaks of its occurring after a long delay. In the story a long delay was necessary to give time for their trading to

- 20 servants cometh, and reckoneth with them. And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold,
- 21 I have gained beside them five talents more. His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler
- 22 over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two
- 23 other talents beside them. His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter
- 24 thou into the joy of thy lord. Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and

develop. *lord . . . servants—i.e.* “slaves.” They are personally his absolute property, and all that they make is necessarily his.

Ver. 20. *other five.* He would lay down the original five talents as well. *behold.* He does not praise himself, but simply points to the facts, without commenting on them, leaving them to speak for him.

Ver. 21. *good.* In the sense of highly efficient, but carrying with it moral appreciation. *faithful.* Loyal to his trust, to his master's interests. *thou . . . lord.* This seems clearly to break through the limits of the story. Five talents can hardly be spoken of as “a few things,” and ver. 14 seems to imply that all their master's capital has been already placed in the hands of his servants, while “the joy of thy lord” is decisive for the meaning of the saying. To interpret it of the joy of a feast made by the slave's master is not rich enough for this climax of reward. To take it of the joy of lordship is to regard the slave as having been made an owner or joint-owner with his master, and that is without any verisimilitude. The speaker is the Lord Christ on His return, and the reward is (1) promotion of him who was good and faithful in the lower sphere to a larger trust and higher rank; (2) entrance into the spiritual joy of the realised kingdom—the joy which the Lord possesses, the climax of blessedness. Cf. ver. 34; Rom. xiv. 17—“the kingdom of God is . . . joy in the Holy Spirit.”

Ver. 23. The second being equal to the first in fidelity and in proportionate performance, though their capacities were unequal, the rewards are equal.

Ver. 24. *hard.* An inhuman tyrant, who regards only his own self-interest, and uses his advantage to drain others ruthlessly, explained by *reaping . . . strawed (i.e.* scattered), probably a proverbial saying, a popular way of describing a hard man. Gathering and scattering is either the same as reaping and sowing, or gathering from another's threshing-floor what thou hast not scattered, thrown

25 gathering where thou hast not strawed : and I was afraid,  
 and went and hid thy talent in the earth : lo, there thou hast  
 26 that is thine. His lord answered and said unto him, Thou  
 wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where  
 27 I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed : thou  
 oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers,  
 and then at my coming I should have received mine own  
 28 with usury. Take therefore the talent from him, and give it  
 29 unto him which hath ten talents. For unto every one that  
 hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance : but from  
 him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he

up to the wind with the winnowing fan. The meaning of both expressions is enriching oneself at the expense of others, a robber exploiting the weak.

Ver. 25. *afraid*. Fear of the cruel treatment he might meet from such a ruthless man, if he were to lose the money, makes him preserve it intact but prevents him from employing it. *that is thine*. With pointed reference to the "other talents" which the first and second servants have spoken of. All that is thine is there, but what of the money's earning power ?

Vers. 26, 27. *wicked*. In the sense of inefficient, but carrying with it moral blame. *slothful*. The master treats his apology as a mere excuse for his real motive, a dislike of exertion, and proves this by assuming that his character is as supposed, and drawing (ver. 27) the necessary consequence of such a belief. *exchangers*. Men who not only exchanged money, but received it like bankers on deposit, and paid interest and guaranteed repayment of the capital. *usury*—"interest." This would have involved no risk of loss, and would have assured some increase.

Ver. 28. *Take*. To whom this is addressed is not stated nor thought of, though perhaps, as in ver. 30, the parable becomes a spiritual allegory, and the angels are in view. *which hath ten*. Who made the most of the largest capital ; not to be pressed into meaning that the first slave was made the owner of the ten talents. It is equivalent to "which hath handed in," but the expression is influenced by the "hath" of ver. 29.

Ver. 29. A general principle grounding this particular action, capable of different applications (cf. n. on xiii. 12). The man who hath is here the man who uses his opportunities and powers (= his capital). The man who hath not is the man for whom these are only possibilities not taken advantage of. *and . . . abundance*. Better, "and it shall be abundantly increased." There are only two classes of men—the haves and the have-nots—and there is a continual change in their condition. Constant use of power and opportunities brings increasing enrichment at an ever-accelerating pace. Constant neglect entails an ever-deepening impoverishment.

30 hath. And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Ver. 30. Here, even more clearly than in vers. 21, 23, the speaker is the Son of Man, passing judgment on His return at the end of the world. As the personal joy of the Lord (vers. 21, 23) is a reward in addition to the higher rank and power attained, and that the climax of blessedness, so the personal misery of being outcast from the joyous blessedness of the Lord, is a punishment in addition to the loss of position and power, and that the climax of punishment. *cast*. Addressed to the angels who accompany the Son of Man on His return to execute judgment. *unprofitable*. The parable hinges on the profitable or unprofitable use of life as determining destiny. The spiritual profit gained by the use or lost by the neglect of life's spiritual opportunities is in view, but that includes the use of earthly goods, as all life is in Christ's view an opportunity for the service of God. Life is viewed as a trust. It is not only a gift, but a calling imposing a task, fidelity to which—*i.e.* to the interests of God—is an essential condition of entering at last the kingdom of joy. *outer . . . teeth*. Cf. n. on viii. 12.

#### XXV. 31-46. THE JUDGMENT OF THE HEATHEN WORLD.

31 When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his  
32 glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth  
33 his sheep from the goats: and he shall set the sheep on his  
34 right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the

Ver. 31. *When—i.e.* at the last day, on His return (cf. xvi. 27). *in his glory*. Clothed with Divine power and majesty. *the throne of his glory*. King and Judge of all humanity. These Divine prerogatives are here passed over to the Son of Man as God's representative.

Vers. 32, 33. *all nations—i.e.* Gentiles, heathens. The judgment of Christians is already described (xxiv. 45-51, xxv. 14-30), and the elect, the true Christians, have been (xxiv. 31) removed from the scene of judgment. *separate*. The separation is the preliminary to the execution of judgment. The *right hand* is the hand of honour, the side of bliss. The *goat* was held the more worthless animal. Perhaps also the *sheep* is used here as the type of the poor and suffering and meek (cf. v. 3-5), and the goat as the type of violence and self-assertion.

Ver. 34. *from . . . world*. The kingdom is therefore the ideal for which human beings are meant to live in the world.

35 foundation of the world: for I was an hungered, and ye  
 gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was  
 36 a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I  
 was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came  
 37 unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord,  
 when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and  
 38 gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took  
 39 thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we  
 40 thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King  
 shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you,  
 Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these  
 41 my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Then shall he say  
 also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed,  
 into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:  
 42 for I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was  
 43 thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye  
 took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in  
 44 prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer  
 him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or  
 a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister  
 45 unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say  
 unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these,

Vers. 35, 36. *took me in*—i.e. into your houses. *naked*—"poorly clad." *visited*. To give help or sympathy. *in prison*. The climax of kindness; for to identify oneself with a criminal was to run the risk of being involved in his disgrace or even in his punishment.

Ver. 37. *righteous*. Because they fulfil the will of God. Their surprise shows that they are not personally acquainted with Christ. "Lord" need be no more than a title of high respect, though it may imply that now they know Him to be the King, or the exalted title is simply put into their lips by the speaker or the evangelist.

Ver. 40. *Inasmuch as*—"in so far as," i.e. to whatever degree, great or small. *my brethren*—i.e. Christians (cf. xxviii. 10). But while this is the original meaning, the principle can be universally extended. For these heathen were not kind to Christians because they were Christ's brothers, but simply from kind instincts of humanity. Kindness to the unfortunate and wretched, without looking for any reward, is kindness to Christ. He is so completely identified with the unfortunate that their attitude to the one is identical with their attitude to the other. Faith in Christ which does not issue in the love of humanity is not faith in the real Christ, and so spontaneous love of humanity is implicit faith in the unknown King of humanity.

Vers. 41-46. *cursed*. The omission of "of God" (cf. ver. 34) is perhaps meant to suggest that it is not God but their own inhumanity which has cursed them. So "for the devil and his angels"

46 ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

not "for you" (cf. ver. 34), and the omission of "from the foundation of the world," means that the everlasting fire was not meant for men, not the plan on which the world was founded. *everlasting*. Must have the same meaning in both clauses of ver. 46 (cf. n. on xviii. 8). The word for *punishment* strictly stands for remedial punishment; but this usage is not always maintained, and there is nothing in this passage to suggest the idea of corrective or limited punishment.

## XXVI.-XXVII. THE PASSION.

### XXVI. 1, 2. FOURTH PREDICTION OF THE PASSION.

- 1 AND it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings,
- 2 he said unto his disciples, Ye know that after two days is the feast of the passover, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified.

Vers. 1, 2. *sayings*—*i.e.* chaps. xxiv., xxv. *after two days*=the day after to-morrow. The Passover began on the 14th of Nisan, the paschal lamb being slain from 3 to 5 o'clock in the afternoon and eaten after sundown when the 15th of Nisan began, the Jews reckoning the day from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. *is betrayed*. The present either is vividly used for the future, or represents the betrayal as so ordained by God.

### XXVI. 3-5. THE PLOTTING OF THE SANHEDRIN.

- 3 Then assembled together the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders of the people, unto the palace of the high
- 4 priest, who was called Caiaphas, and consulted that they
- 5 might take Jesus by subtilty, and kill him. But they said, Not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar among the people.

Ver. 3. Delete "and the scribes." The Sanhedrin is described after its two chief elements—the priestly party, who were mostly Sadducees, and the official leaders of the people, who were mostly Pharisees. *the palace of the high priest*. Not the usual place of meeting. *Caiaphas*. High Priest for seventeen years till removed 37 A.D.

Ver. 5. *on the feast day*—"during the feast." *uproar*. They would be afraid especially of the crowds of Galilean pilgrims. If their purpose was to wait till the feast was over, and the crowds were gone, it was broken by events. Others think their design was to arrest Jesus before the Passover; but the crowds would still be present then, and the danger of a riot as great as ever.



## XXVI. 6-13. THE ANOINTING IN BETHANY.

6 Now when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the  
 7 leper, there came unto him a woman having an alabaster box  
 of very precious ointment, and poured it on his head, as he  
 8 sat at meat. But when his disciples saw it, they had in-  
 9 dignation, saying, To what purpose is this waste? For this  
 ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the  
 10 poor. When Jesus understood it, he said unto them, Why  
 trouble ye the woman? for she hath wrought a good work  
 11 upon me. For ye have the poor always with you; but me  
 12 ye have not always. For in that she hath poured this oint-  
 13 ment on my body, she did it for my burial. Verily I say  
 unto you, Whosoever this gospel shall be preached in the  
 whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done,  
 be told for a memorial of her.

Ver. 6. *was in Bethany.* The position of this incident is suggestive: "Hatred and baseness on either hand, and true love in the midst" (Bruce). *the leper*—i.e. who was or had been a leper. If he were still a leper, he would not be present; but he is more likely to have been cured, perhaps by Jesus. He must have been a friend of Jesus.

Ver. 7. *a woman.* Nameless. Mary of Bethany, if John xii. 1-11 relates the same incident. *box*—"vase."

Vers. 10-12. *understood it*—"perceived it." *a good work*—i.e. beautiful, noble, awakening admiration. Ordinarily love for Christ can only fulfil itself in kindness to the unfortunate (xxv. 31-46), but while He was in the flesh He was represented by Himself. The beauty of the woman's act lies in the spontaneity of her love and in its appropriateness to the special circumstances. She may have had a foreboding of His death, or may only have acted from love and admiration for Him, without ulterior thought; but as Christ sees more in acts of kindness done simply for kindness' sake than the kind doer knows of (xxv. 31-46), so He sees in this act more than the woman meant, an anointing of His body for death. There is an inspiration of the Spirit in deeds of love which makes them mean more than the lover is aware of. *not always.* Pathetic way of saying, "soon ye will not have me." *for my burial.* To prepare me (i.e. my body) for burial.

Ver. 13. *this gospel.* With reference to ver. 12, "the gospel of my death." *a memorial of her.* It is strange that after this saying she is nameless in Mark and Matthew. They could not have known her name.

## XXVI. 14-16. THE TREACHERY OF JUDAS.

- 14 Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the  
 15 chief priests, and said unto them, What will ye give me, and  
 I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with  
 16 him for thirty pieces of silver. And from that time he  
 sought opportunity to betray him.

Ver. 14. His guilt is all the greater because he was *one of the twelve*. *went*. On his own initiative, not tempted by the priests or by any one else. *Iscariot*. Cf. n. on x. 4. *chief priests*. Possibly the Sanhedrin was still sitting in the meeting described in vers. 3-5.

Ver. 15. Matthew, as compared with Mark xiv. 10, lays emphasis on Judas' greed. Possibly he had come to be disappointed with Jesus when he saw that there was to be no worldly Messianic kingdom with material rewards. The scene and words of Jesus (vers. 6-13) may have brought his growing revulsion—the hatred of a disappointed man—to a climax, and decided him to make some gain out of betraying Jesus. *covenanted with him for*—"weighed out to him." *thirty pieces of silver*—i.e. thirty shekels=£4 or £5 at most. Matthew alone mentions the sum. Though it seems small, it might be quite sufficient for avarice. But Matthew has clearly added to Mark xiv. 11 in view of Zech. xi. 12, 13, as is distinctly seen in xxvii. 9.

## XXVI. 17-19. PREPARATION FOR THE PASSOVER.

- 17 Now the first day of the feast of unleavened bread the  
 disciples came to Jesus, saying unto him, Where wilt thou  
 18 that we prepare for thee to eat the passover? And he said,  
 Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The

Ver. 17. *the first day . . . bread*. Nisan 14, Passover day, in the afternoon of which, from three to five, the paschal lamb was slain. Properly speaking, the feast of unleavened bread, which lasted seven days, did not begin till Nisan 15. But the whole season seems to have been called indiscriminately the feast of the Passover or the feast of unleavened bread, and Nisan 14 was reckoned popularly the first day. Cf. n. on ver. 2. *Where*. It seems late for the disciples to be thinking of preparing for the Passover, and even of finding a place for its celebration; and some regard this as a sign that the Last Supper was really held, as John xiii. 1 seems to make it, before the Passover day—one day before it according to some, two days according to others. *for thee*. Jesus being like the father of the family to the Twelve. *eat the passover*—i.e. the paschal lamb.

Ver. 18. There is an air of secrecy thrown round the man. He

Master saith, My time is at hand; I will keep the passover  
 19 at thy house with my disciples. And the disciples did as  
 Jesus had appointed them; and they made ready the pass-  
 over.

was probably one of Jesus' friends with whom He had made arrangements secretly beforehand to secure Himself from disturbance during His last evening meal. Matthew does not say how the disciples were to find the man. Judas would not know who the man was, and could not do anything till he had learned Jesus' movements. *The Master*—"The Rabbi," "The well-known teacher." *My time . . . hand*. This was perhaps the signal prearranged with His friend, or at least an unmistakable message that the room is wanted now. If so, it would not be Passover day. In Jesus' mind the words most likely mean "the time for my death." To the friend they would only mean that Jesus wanted the room now, because some critical event was at hand. *keep the passover*. The Evangelist clearly supposed that Jesus did eat the paschal lamb. But there is some confusion in the Synoptic narrative, and it is not possible to be certain whether it was the regular Passover with the paschal lamb there, or whether it was a meal which Jesus made to serve the purpose of the Passover. It is certain that He was crucified on a Friday, but it is not certain on what day of the month the Friday fell that year. But the references to the symbolism and language of the Passover in vers. 26-29 seem so clear that the Passover at least must have been in the mind of Christ at the time.

#### XXVI. 20-25. THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF A TRAITOR IN THE TWELVE.

20 Now when the even was come, he sat down with the twelve.  
 21 And as they did eat, he said, Verily I say unto you, That  
 22 one of you shall betray me. And they were exceeding  
 sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto him,  
 23 Lord, is it I? And he answered and said, He that dippeth  
 his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me.

Ver. 20. *sat down*. Reclined with the head supported by the left elbow—the ordinary posture at a meal. *Verily*. Of a solemn announcement, usually, though not quite always, something hard to believe.

Ver. 22. *is it I?*—"it cannot be I, can it?"—a combination of fear, incredulity, and indignant protest. The announcement has fallen on them like a thunderbolt. One of us—a traitor!

Ver. 23. In the East, now as then, men eat by dipping their hands into the common dish. This does not tell who is the traitor, for they all dip their hands in the common dish. It emphasises the heinousness of the treachery. For to share a common meal in the East

- 24 The Son of man goeth as it is written of him : but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed ! it had been  
 25 good for that man if he had not been born. Then Judas, which betrayed him, answered and said, Master, is it I ? He said unto him, Thou hast said.

constituted the most sacred bond of friendship. It was not merely a sign of friendship : it carried with it a religious sanction. Matthew, who has changed the tense of Mark xiv. 20 and inserted ver. 25, may have understood it as identifying Judas, supposing perhaps that Jesus and Judas dipped their hands at the same time into the dish. *the dish*. If it were the regular paschal lamb, the dish meant is probably the Charoseth, a pulp of the colour of clay, composed of bruised fruits and held to be symbolic of the clay out of which the Israelites had to make bricks in Egypt. Into the Charoseth the bitter herbs, symbolic of the bitterness of bondage in Egypt, wrapped round a piece of bread, were dipped.

Ver. 24. *goeth*. To His destiny, here His death. *written*. Fulfilling the O.T. scriptures. His death is thus not due to Judas, nor to any man, but to the purpose of God, and must therefore have a Divine meaning independent of the course of events. This would alter Jesus' feeling with regard to His death, but it does not lessen the heinousness of Judas' treachery. Though Jesus was destined to die, Judas need not have been the agent in effecting His death. *woe . . . born*. These words describe a terrible fate. The warning was probably meant to deter Judas, even at the eleventh hour—an attempt to save him.

Ver. 25. This verse is an addition by Matthew. Judas likely enough joined with the others in saying, "it cannot be I, can it?" But it is hardly conceivable that Jesus would have publicly and unmistakably affirmed that Judas was the traitor; else the other disciples would in their indignation have made some attempt to frustrate him (cf. ver. 51). But "thou hast said" is not equal to "yes." It suggests but does not expressly say "yes." "The word is yours." It is enough to tell Judas, who knows the fact, that Jesus knows it, if He cannot prove it, but not enough to create in the minds of the others more than a suspicion, and perhaps they would feel inclined rather to dismiss it as a thing incredible. Judas can have done nothing to make them suspect him.

## XXVI. 26-29. THE LORD'S SUPPER.

- 26 And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take,

Ver. 26. *as they were eating*. A repetition of "as they did eat" in ver. 21, to introduce another incident which took place in the course of the meal. From Matthew's placing the announcement of

27 eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks,  
 28 and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my  
 blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the

the traitor before the Lord's Supper, it may be supposed that he regarded Judas as going out before Jesus took bread. Ver. 47 shows that he had left the company. Some, however, think that Judas slipped away in the darkness as they went to the Mount of Olives.

*took bread.* A cake of bread. If it were the paschal meal, it would be one of the cakes of unleavened bread. At what point in the meal Jesus took bread is not stated. But ver. 29 would suggest that it was at the end of the meal, which would be also most natural. *blessed it*—"uttered a blessing." It is not said that He blessed the bread. "Blessed" is practically the same as "gave thanks" in ver. 27—a prayer in which God was blessed, praised, and thanked, not a prayer in which God was asked to bless what was now to be done or given. There were several benedictions and thanksgivings in the course of the paschal meal. At the point where the paschal meal properly began, the head of the household took two cakes of bread, broke one and laid the fragment on the other, and said, "Blessed is He that bringeth bread out of the earth." But on other occasions (Mark vi. 41, viii. 6), and even at an ordinary meal (Luke xxiv. 30), Jesus, when He broke bread, uttered a prayer of blessing or thanksgiving. There is at least something in common between these acts and His present act, and that is a consecrating of the common meal; but it seems to be more—a sacramental symbolism. It was an act so distinctive of Jesus that by it in Luke xxiv. 30 He was recognised. *gave it.* Either by personally handing it, or, more likely, as they were all reclining, by placing the pieces on a plate from which each could help himself (cf. "take"). *this is my body.* "Is" cannot mean "is identical with," because His body was still there, distinct from the bread. Besides, in Aramaic, the language Jesus spoke in, "is" would not be expressed. The meaning is, this broken bread represents my body, *i.e.* as it will be when it is broken by death. It is a parable in act, like the feet-washing in John xiii. 4-20.

Ver. 27. *the cup*—"a cup." The third cup in the paschal meal, filled with red wine mixed with water, drunk after the lamb was eaten, was called the Cup of Blessing, because thanks was offered over it. It may have been this cup which Jesus took, but any cup would have done. *Drink*, like *take*, *eat*, symbolises the spiritual assimilation of Christ and appropriation of the blessings given through His death.

*all.* The emphasis on "all" indicates the common participation in the blessing. It is a communion not only with Christ but with each other. They all get the same gift, which binds them all in a unity of spiritual brotherhood (cf. 1 Cor. x. 16, 17).

Ver. 28. For "testament" read "covenant." *for*—"unto." Having the remission of sins as its end. This verse definitely relates the virtue of the spiritual assimilation and appropriation of

29 remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.

Christ to His death on the ground that through His death remission of sins is secured. St. Paul, in 1 Cor. xi. 24, "broken for you," relates the broken Body to His death in the same way as is here done with the shed Blood. *my blood of the covenant* means, "my blood which ratifies the covenant." The words are based not on the Passover but on the covenant made on Mount Sinai, which was sealed and ratified with blood (Ex. xxiv. 8). *new* is the genuine reading in 1 Cor. xi. 25, Luke xxii. 20, and, though probably to be omitted here with the best MSS, is involved in the thought. It is the new covenant prophesied by Jer. xxxi. 31-33; a new religious relation to God, established by Christ and ratified by His death, which aims at and secures the remission of sins.

*for many* does not mean "not for all." The contrast is between the One whose blood is shed and the many, the multitude of men for whom it is shed (cf. n. on xx. 28). *For* does not here mean "instead of," but "on account of," *i.e.* "for the good of." *For remission of sins* is an addition by Matthew explaining definitely the thought involved (cf. Jer. xxxi. 34). Cf. n. on iii. 11.

Ver. 29. This is Jesus' farewell, but farewell with a joyous reunion in view. The phrase "fruit of the vine" is reminiscent of the benediction over the first cup of wine in the paschal meal, "Blessed be God who has created the fruit of the vine." Matthew, by inserting *this* [(cf. Mark xiv. 25), makes the reference to the paschal wine more definite. *new*. Because all things, and therefore wine among them, are made new in the Messianic kingdom (cf. Rev. xxi. 5). The joys of that kingdom are often depicted under the symbol of the joys of a feast (cf. viii. 11). *with you*. Of the fellowship of personal communion.

## XXVI. 30-35. ON THE WAY TO GETHSEMANE.

30 And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the 31 mount of Olives. Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall

Ver. 30. *an hymn*. The second part of the Hallel, Ps. cxv.-cxviii., sung after the third cup in the paschal meal; or the Great Hallel, Ps. cxxxvi., sung at the close of the meal after a fourth cup was drunk. The Passover had to be brought to a close by midnight at latest. It is said that Passover night had to be spent in the city, but the rule does not seem to have been always observed, and besides, it may not have been Passover night (cf. n. on ver. 18). It was probably some time before midnight when Jesus went out to the Mount of Olives.

Vers. 31, 32. *Then—i.e.* on the way to the Mount of Olives, which led across the Kidron. *shall . . . me—i.e.* shall find occasion in

be offended because of me this night : for it is written, I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be  
 32 scattered abroad. But after I am risen again, I will go  
 33 before you into Galilee. Peter answered and said unto him, Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I  
 34 never be offended. Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny  
 35 me thrice. Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples.

me to cause you to stumble in your faith. *I . . . abroad.* Zech. xiii. 7 reproduced with some freedom. *go before you.* As a shepherd leading his flock—*i.e.* I the Risen Christ shall lead you into Galilee ; or simply I, the Risen Christ, shall be in Galilee before you.

Vers. 33-35. Peter was perfectly sincere, but did not know his weakness. *before . . . crow—i.e.* before dawn. *Though . . . die—*“though I should have to die.”

#### XXVI. 36-46. GETHSEMANE.

36 Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go  
 37 and pray yonder. And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy.

Ver. 36. *a place.* A plot of ground. *Gethsemane.* The word means oil-press, probably from the olives which grew there. It was an enclosed piece of ground or garden, which we must suppose belonged to some friend of Jesus, a favourite resort of His (cf. John xviii. 1, 2). *Sit ye here.* The less intimate disciples stand farther back from His sacred sorrow, as they are least able to understand and sympathise. Yet He wishes to have them in the background, partly because it helps Him to feel that they are not far off, partly because love in its last short hour clings to its own. *while I . . . yonder—*“till I have gone away yonder and prayed,” pointing to a spot some distance off. If there were moonlight, it must have been a cloudy night, according to John xviii. 3, who makes the temple police come with lanterns and torches. There may have been only a dim starlight.

Ver. 37. Peter, James, and John, his three most intimate disciples, who were with Him on the Mount of Transfiguration also.

*began.* The sorrow was in His soul before, but He has kept it under control. Now, with none but His most intimate friends present, He begins to give way to it. It would be because He felt it coming on Him with overmastering force that He sought the garden and the secrecy.

38 Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful,  
 39 even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me. And  
 he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed,  
 saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from  
 40 me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt. And he  
 cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith  
 unto Peter, What! could ye not watch with me one hour?

*very heavy*—"distracted," a strong word, expressing both anguish and bewilderment.

Ver. 38. *saith he*. He does not seek to hide His trouble, but in a truly human way lets it utter itself to His most confidential friends, seeking relief and sympathy, and wishing to reveal Himself to them. *even unto death*. Feeling the full weight of all the mortal human weakness that was in Him, the agony of death as His soul realised it by anticipation. *watch with me*. Of the loving sympathy which stands by and feels with the struggler.

Ver. 39. *a little farther*. He must fight it out alone, and yet, though alone, His friends must be close by. Solitude with friends in the immediate neighbourhood helps, but utter solitude crushes. *fell on his face*. The uttermost prostration; not on His knees merely; but still He fights. *prayed*. Jesus doubtless gave vent in His distress to the strong crying and tears of Heb. v. 7. There must have been long silences, during which the disciples fell asleep. Words uttered aloud the disciples would be near enough to catch. The words reported give the gist and spirit of His prayer. It was a struggle for resignation to the will of God. *O my Father*. The child spirit in Jesus is supreme. He never doubts the love of His Father. It is a true, obedient son He tries to be. *if it be . . . me*. The request reveals the genuine humanity of Christ. It is in no way inconsistent with His conviction of the necessity of His death; for He does not know the precise details of the how and the when of His death. His whole life is a life of faith following the guidance of His Father. He has felt, however, the shadow of the coming event. *this cup*. His approaching Passion, the bitterness of which He already feels (cf. xx. 22). The intensity of His agony shows that He must have anticipated more in His death than the ordinary man or martyr experiences. *nevertheless . . . wilt*. It is not sin to shrink from suffering or wish to escape from it; it is only human weakness. The sin is to refuse to subject one's will to the will of God, once that is clear. Only the course of events can prove if it be indeed the will of God. Jesus waits on that; but realising that it will be so, gets Himself ready to submit.

Ver. 40. *cometh*. Probably to get some help and comfort from their sympathy, for He has not yet won the victory. *Peter*. Though Peter is addressed, the words are spoken to the three. *What! . . . watch*—"So you had not strength to watch?" or, "So unable were you to watch!"



41 Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the  
 42 spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. He went  
 away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my  
 Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I  
 43 drink it, thy will be done. And he came and found them  
 44 asleep again: for their eyes were heavy. And he left them,  
 and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the  
 45 same words. Then cometh he to his disciples, and saith unto  
 them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: behold, the hour is  
 at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of

Ver. 41. *that . . . temptation.* It might be that Jesus warns them to watch and pray lest, by not doing so, they should come to be tempted. But it is much better and more suggestive of His present experience to take "that . . . temptation" as the subject they are to watch and pray about, exactly as vi. 13, and temptation will be, as in vi. 13, a trial in which they might easily fall and sin. Then *the spirit . . . weak* will not be meant merely as a generous excuse for their sleeping, but will give the reason why they should watch and pray. There is an echo of His own experience in it. Realising by His struggle how weak the flesh is, and how dangerous that weakness is, though the spirit is willing, or better, eager, he bids them be on the alert not to enter, and pray not to be allowed to enter, into a trial which may test them too severely. Indeed, it is contrary to the spirit of humility, essential to a Christian (v. 3, 5), to seek to enter into any real moral trial, whether it be thought too severe or not. Vers. 69-75 are the best commentary on this verse. Peter, in his present state of moral weakness revealed in the garden, should not have entered the palace.

Ver. 42. *the second time.* He has not yet won the victory over the desires of the flesh, so He returns to prayer. The prayer marks an advance on the first in the spirit of resignation. There is no request for the removal of the cup, but a gathering up of His strength to accept the inevitable. *thy will be done.* The third petition in the Lord's Prayer (cf. vi. 10 and the reference to the sixth petition in ver. 41).

Ver. 43. *came.* He is still craving for human sympathy, and therefore He has not yet won the victory. *heavy.* Through the strain of the crowded day since xxvi. 17, and the lateness of the night, and the weariness of deep depression.

Ver. 44. *left them.* Finally. There was no help from them. *the same words.* No further progress in words was possible, only in His complete acquiescence in them.

Vers. 45, 46. *Then.* Now the victory is won, and He is independent of their sympathy. *Sleep . . . rest.* Sad but gentle irony. The note is hardly even reproachful. The battle is over, and therefore it does not matter now though they sleep. It is ironical also because He hears the sound of approaching footsteps and sees the

46 sinners. Rise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that doth betray me.

shadowy figures moving on. There will be no more sleep for them to-night. Sleep on now—if you can! *sinner*—*i.e.* the Sanhedrin. *Rise . . . going.* Jesus does not wait passively for His betrayer, but steps out calmly to meet him.

### XXVI. 47-56. THE ARREST.

47 And while he yet spake, lo, Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from  
48 the chief priests and elders of the people. Now he that betrayed him gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall  
49 kiss, that same is he: hold him fast. And forthwith he came to Jesus, and said, Hail, Master! and kissed him.  
50 And Jesus said unto him, Friend, wherefore art thou come? Then came they, and laid hands on Jesus, and took him.  
51 And, behold, one of them which were with Jesus stretched out his hand, and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the  
52 high priest, and smote off his ear. Then said Jesus unto

Ver. 47. *one of the twelve.* Cf. n. on ver. 14. *a great multitude.* A relatively large band of temple police. *staves*—"cudgels." *chief . . . people.* The Sanhedrin (cf. ver. 3). They expected a desperate resistance on the part of Jesus and His disciples—so did they and Judas completely misunderstand Him. Judas may have told them that the disciples were armed (cf. ver. 51; Luke xxii. 38).

Ver. 48. *gave*—*i.e.* now, as they were approaching. *kiss.* On the hand, the customary way in which a disciple saluted his Teacher. Judas' motive would be to identify Jesus and to put Him off His guard. *hold him fast*—"seize Him."

Ver. 49. *forthwith.* Immediately after speaking, as in ver. 48. *Master*—"Rabbi," "Teacher." *kissed him*—"kissed Him fondly, fervently" (cf. 2 Sam. xx. 9, 10).

Ver. 50. *Friend.* Jesus is kindly to the last, but will not let the treacherous, hypocritical kiss pass.

*wherefore . . . come?* Either "(do that) for which thou hast come," *i.e.* do not be a hypocrite, or "(dost thou kiss Me) for that for which thou hast come?"—*i.e.* canst thou kiss Me with such a purpose in view? The sentence is left unfinished in suppressed horror.

Ver. 51. *one of them.* Unnamed by any of the three Synoptists. John xviii. 10 says it was Peter. It is more likely that the name was unknown to the Synoptists, than that they suppressed it because it would have been dangerous for Peter to have it published. Judas was right in expecting resistance from the disciples, but he did not know the difference between Jesus and His disciples.

Ver. 52. A genuine saying of Jesus in harmony with v. 39 (cf.

him, Put up again thy sword into his place : for all they that  
 53 take the sword shall perish with the sword. Thinkest thou  
 that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently  
 54 give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then  
 55 shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be? In  
 that same hour said Jesus to the multitudes, Are ye come  
 out as against a thief with swords and staves for to take me?  
 I sat daily with you teaching in the temple, and ye laid no  
 56 hold on me. But all this was done, that the scriptures of  
 the prophets might be fulfilled. Then all the disciples for-  
 sook him, and fled.

Rev. xiii. 10). It is not contradicted by x. 34 or Luke xxii. 36, where "sword" is used figuratively—in x. 34 of the divisions and hostilities created by adherence to Christ ; in Luke xxii. 36 of the persecuting hostility His disciples will experience when they will be reckoned as anarchists and will have to rely on their own resources. Jesus nowhere permits His followers to repel force by force.

Ver. 53. The sword not only recoils on those who use it, but is unnecessary. If Jesus wished to escape arrest, He has abundance of higher powers at His command. *twelve legions*. Contrasted with twelve disciples. The spiritual forces are described in Roman military language. *pray to*. The word used of summoning reinforcements. *give*. Of placing them at His disposal in the battle.

Ver. 54. But Jesus surrenders Himself voluntarily (cf. John x. 18), fulfilling His destiny foretold in the O.T. The whole tendency of ancient prophecy is in view rather than any specific passage such as Isa. liii. or Ps. cxviii. 22.

Ver. 55. *the multitudes*. Here denoting the band with Judas (ver. 47). *a thief*—"robber"—a thief who uses violence. Jesus protests against the manner of His arrest. He is not one who either resorts to violence or hides from justice or resists capture, as was shown by His frank public presence and fearless teaching for several days in the Temple. *laid no hold*. Not only have they misunderstood Him and insulted Him by their manner of arrest, but the failure to arrest Him in public shows that arrest itself is wrong.

Ver. 56. *But . . . fulfilled*. A saying of the evangelist, repeating Jesus' thought in ver. 54. *all . . . fled*. In sudden panic, as Jesus foretold in ver. 31.

## XXVI. 57-68. THE TRIAL BEFORE CAIAPHAS

57 And they that had laid hold on Jesus led him away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders

Ver. 57. *the scribes and the elders*. A way of describing the Sanhedrin, which Matthew conceives as still sitting in Caiaphas' palace since xxvi. 3, awaiting the return of the police with the prisoner.

58 were assembled. But Peter followed him afar off unto the high priest's palace, and went in, and sat with the servants,  
 59 to see the end. Now the chief priests, and elders, and all the council, sought false witness against Jesus, to put him to  
 60 death; but found none: yea, though many false witnesses came, yet found they none. At the last came two false  
 61 witnesses, and said, This fellow said, I am able to destroy  
 62 the temple of God, and to build it in three days. And the high priest arose, and said unto him, Answerest thou nothing?

Ver. 58. *afar off*. Recovering a little from his panic, drawn by curiosity and love; bolder than the others, yet not bold enough to come up close. *went in*—*i.e.* through the gate across the outer court to the inner court of the palace.

Ver. 59. *the council*. The Sanhedrin, of which the chief priests and elders were a part, though "elders" is to be omitted here with the best MSS. *sought false witness*. No desire to find out the truth, simply a pretext for condemning Him. Witness for the defence should have been summoned first, but the whole procedure was illegal. What they did was to call for witnesses to give evidence against Him. Though prejudiced, the witnesses may not all have been false in intention, but their evidence was contrary to the facts.

Ver. 60. *found none*—*i.e.* no evidence on which they could plausibly convict. Mark xiv. 56 makes the failure turn on the want of agreement in the evidence. *two*. The minimum number required by the law (cf. Num. xxxv. 30; Deut. xvii. 6, xix. 15).

Ver. 61. This may be a distorted version of a saying of Jesus, or it may be a fairly correct version of some figurative saying of His which was misunderstood. While Jesus, in xxiv. 2, did prophesy to His disciples the destruction of the temple and His triumphant appearance thereafter,—Judas may have reported it,—He could not speak of rebuilding it. John ii. 21 makes it refer to His Death and Resurrection, the temple being the temple of His body. In Mark xiv. 58 the contrast seems to be between the destruction of the literal temple and either His Resurrection or, more likely, the building of the spiritual temple of the new Israel, the Christian community, *i.e.* the Church (cf. Acts vi. 14). In the latter case, the three days may still have a reference to the Resurrection, the Church springing into existence through His Resurrection. Three days might be meant literally, or more likely it is a proverbial expression for "within an incredibly short time" (cf. n. on xii. 40). *I am able*. A claim to supernatural power is thought of.

Ver. 62. Best taken as one question, "Answerest Thou nothing as to that which these . . ." The High Priest tries to get Jesus to say something on which they may be able to fasten. The charge of destroying the temple, though offensive enough to Jewish ears, was not definite enough, and even though it were, and though it indicated

63 what is it which these witness against thee? But Jesus held his peace. And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether  
 64 thou be the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless, I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of  
 65 power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy;

revolutionary tendencies, would be hardly sufficient to get a Roman Governor to condemn Him to death.

Ver. 63. *held his peace.* The dignity of silence. The speaker is not sincere, and condemnation is a foregone conclusion. So, because it would be useless trying to explain a figurative spiritual saying which they had neither the capacity nor the will to understand, Jesus maintains silence. Besides, He could not prove His power, He could only assert it (cf. His silence, xxi. 27, xxvii. 14). *I adjure thee*, or perhaps more literally, "I put thee on oath." *the living God.* The God who, because He is living, has power to punish the perjurer. The High Priest, irritated and baffled by His silence, tries to force His hand on the Messianic claim—the real point in dispute. *the Son of God.* Here simply the equivalent of the Messiah.

Ver. 64. *Thou hast said.* Not simply equivalent to yes. It is an indirect affirmative (cf. n. on ver. 25). Jesus cannot be silent now when challenged on the vital question of His life, whether He be the Messiah, else His silence might be taken as equivalent to a denial. If they crucify the Messiah, they cannot say that He left them in ignorance of the truth. Yet Jesus means by the Messiah something different from what they do, and therefore He cannot answer the question directly. He is not the Messiah they mean, yet He is *the* Messiah (cf. John xviii. 37). *nevertheless*—"yet," correcting and amplifying the words, "thou hast said." "I am the Messiah, but a Messiah whose Messiahship will be revealed to you in the future." In the hour when Jesus has lost the present, He knows that the future is His. *Hereafter*—"from now," "henceforth." That could only mean "from the Resurrection," carrying with it the Ascension. The word is not in Mark xiv. 62, and seems to have been added under the early Christian idea of an immediate return of Christ. But the revelation of Jesus as the Messiah, *i.e.* exalted and glorified, does begin from the Resurrection. *shall ye . . . heaven*—*i.e.* have experiences which will show you that I am He who was spoken of in Ps. cx. 1 and Dan. vii. 13. In Dan. vii. 13 the coming is primarily a coming to God, and so the Ascension would be in view; but the order, sitting and coming, and the general N.T. use of this apocalyptic phrase, show that it refers to the return of Christ, as in xxiv. 30. *of power*—"of the Power," *i.e.* God—the later Jewish evasive way of naming God. *in the clouds*—"upon the clouds."

Ver. 65. *rent his clothes.* The ancient Eastern way of expressing

what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye  
 66 have heard his blasphemy. What think ye? They answered  
 67 and said, He is guilty of death. Then did they spit in his  
 face, and buffeted him; and others smote him with the  
 68 palms of their hands, saying, Prophecy unto us, thou Christ,  
 Who is he that smote thee?

grief or horror. The Rabbis had laid down rules as to the correct way of doing even this. The horror of the High Priest was largely theatrical. For the Sadducaic party, to which the priests belonged, hardly seem to have held any Messianic belief. *blasphemy*. It is held by some that the claim to be the Messiah could not be regarded as blasphemy. Yet the Messiah was held to have so peculiar a relation to God that a false claim might be held derogatory to the Divine honour (cf. Deut. xiii. 5, where death is the penalty for being a false prophet).

Ver. 66. Death was the penalty of blasphemy (Lev. xxiv. 16). But they proceeded illegally in taking judgment by acclamation and in pronouncing sentence immediately. The law was that the votes should be taken singly and sentence delayed for a day.

Ver. 67. Instead of fasting for the day, after the votes were taken, as they were bound by the law to do, they proceeded to abuse the prisoner. *spit*. Expression of contempt (cf. Deut. xxv. 9). *buffeted*. Struck with their fists. *smote . . . hands*. The word for *smote* commonly means to smite with a rod. If it were the police—who were guilty of this horse-play (cf. Luke xxii. 63)—they might have used the cudgels which they carried (cf. ver. 47; Isa. l. 6, liii. 3-5).

Ver. 68. Either Matthew presupposes their covering of Jesus' face, which he has omitted from Mark xiv. 65, and then Jesus is asked to say which of His unseen smiters struck Him; or, their names being unknown to Him, He is asked to name them. The first is the more probable.

## XXVI. 69-75. PETER'S DENIAL.

69 Now Peter sat without in the palace: and a damsel came

Ver. 69. *without in the palace*. Outside in the inner courtyard. Outside as compared with Jesus, who would be in a room within the palace. *Thou also*. Perhaps as well as the unnamed disciple (ver. 51) of whom the police may have talked after coming to the palace. *Jesus of Galilee*. Matthew has changed Mark's "the Nazarene, Jesus" to "Jesus, the Galilean," probably to suggest what he takes to be the reason for her discovery, Peter's Galilean accent. The presence of a Galilean there among the servants was almost proof positive that he was a follower of Jesus. From Mark xiv. 67 it might be rather inferred that Peter's anxious face betrayed him. She may have been only a mischievous girl, who thought she was

70 unto him, saying, Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee. But he denied before them all, saying, I know not what thou  
 71 sayest. And when he was gone out into the porch, another maid saw him, and said unto them that were there, This  
 72 fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth. And again he  
 73 denied with an oath, I do not know the man. And after a while came unto him they that stood by, and said to Peter, Surely thou also art one of them; for thy speech bewrayeth  
 74 thee. Then began he to curse and to swear, saying, I know  
 75 not the man. And immediately the cock crew. And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly.

clever, and liked to torment him. But in a palace the mind of the master is often the mind of the servant.

Ver. 70. *before them all*—i.e. all the servants. The girl had spoken aloud, and turned the attention of all on Peter, to his embarrassment. So Peter had afterwards to cover up one lie with another. *I . . . sayest*—"I do not know what you mean"—an evasive answer. A direct No would have been more effective. But Peter had too much of a conscience and too little inclination to give the lie direct.

Ver. 71. *gone out*. He felt it too hot a place now. *the porch*—"the gateway." He did not go outside altogether, because he still wished to see the end (cf. ver. 58). Want of decision at every turn, making matters ever worse. *another maid*. Mark xiv. 69 makes her the same maid, which is much more probable. Matthew seems to have misunderstood Mark. *them that were there*. The same as in ver. 70. *This fellow*. Pointing to Peter in the gateway.

Ver. 72. Peter is now driven to lie outright and confirm it with an oath, which shows that with his rising passion he is reverting to his old fisherman's habits.

Ver. 73. *after a while*—"after a short while." *came*. It was good sport to bait a man so angry and confused. If Peter had been quiet, and master of himself, they might have left him alone; but Peter plunges from one mistake into another. *Surely*—"to be sure." They have no doubt. *thou also*. Picking up the maid's words. *thy speech*. The Judæans, who despised the Galileans, were specially contemptuous of their inability to pronounce clearly and correctly, the gutturals particularly. These bystanders would be Judæans, which helps to account for their baiting of Peter.

Ver. 74. *curse*—i.e. to call down a curse upon himself if he were not speaking the truth—the climax of his denial.

Ver. 75. The crowing of the cock, which he had quite forgotten, awakens his memory. The blinding veil of passion is suddenly lifted, and he sees clearly what he has done. *went out*—to be alone with

his grief. He had thrust himself in to see the end, but this was the end for Peter. He should never have gone in. The weakness which made him sleep in the garden made him deny Christ in the courtyard (cf. ver. 41). *wept*. Loud, audible weeping—passionate in all his ways. *bitterly*. Because he had boasted, had been forewarned, had denied the Christ he loved, had not feared God, and was so good at heart. Conscience, heart, memory, and self-revelation all combined in one dreadful pang, which seemed inconsolable.

## XXVII. 1, 2. DELIVERY OF JESUS TO PILATE.

- 1 WHEN the morning was come, all the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death :
- 2 and when they had bound him, they led him away, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor.

Ver. 1. *all . . . people*=a full meeting of the Sanhedrin. This is evidently the same meeting as in xxvi. 59. It is, however, described as though it were another meeting, because it would probably be formally reconstituted in order to abide by the letter of the law, which required two meetings in order to condemn a criminal (cf. n. on xxvi. 66). Absent members may have joined them now, making up a full meeting. The object was to confirm the sentence already passed and to formulate the charge in a way that would secure condemnation by Pilate. The charge would require to be one of high treason.

Ver. 2. *bound*. Jesus would have been bound when arrested, but freed when He stood before the Sanhedrin. He is now bound again.

*Pontius Pilate*. The fifth Procurator of Judæa from 26 to 36 A.D. He usually resided at Cæsarea, but had come up to Jerusalem to keep order during the feast of the Passover. *the governor*. The general title used here for his distinctive title of procurator. A large measure of local government was allowed to the Jews by the Romans, but the death-sentence required to be confirmed and carried out by the procurator.

## XXVII. 3-10. SUICIDE OF JUDAS.

- 3 Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty

Ver. 3. *Then*. This incident, which is peculiar to Matthew among the Synoptists, has been inserted by him into the order of Mark's narrative. It may not be the right sequence of events, as it is not easy to see how the Sanhedrin would still be sitting, and vers. 6, 7 relate a subsequent event. *when . . . condemned*. In the light of the



4 pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And 5 they said, What is that to us? see thou to that. And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, 6 and went and hanged himself. And the chief priests took the silver pieces, and said, It is not lawful for to put them 7 into the treasury, because it is the price of blood. And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter's field, to bury 8 strangers in. Wherefore that field was called, The field of 9 blood, unto this day. Then was fulfilled that which was

accomplished deed, Judas, like Peter (xxvi. 75), realises what his treachery means. Some infer from these words that Judas did not anticipate this result, but meant only to force Jesus' hand and compel Him to establish the kingdom forthwith. But ver. 4 implies rather the view of the note on xxvi. 15 (cf. also vii. 6). The attitude of Jesus from His arrest would take the sweetness out of his revenge and greed. His conscience awakening, as he watched Him, would break into an avenging flame when he saw Him condemned. In His condemnation Judas would hear his own doom pronounced. *repented himself*—"repented," not of a religious change of mind, but in the sense of regretting his deed and wishing it were undone. His remorse might have become the beginning of a better understanding of Jesus, if he had not committed suicide. If he had been wholly bad, his conscience would not thus have stung him.

Vers. 4, 5. *see thou to that*—"thou shalt see to that"="that is your concern." *the temple*—i.e. the shrine, the Holy Place which none but priests dared enter. In this way he at least flung the money back on the priests, despite their refusal, and perhaps in his despair thought that the curse on the tainted money might thus be removed. *departed*—"retired," so as not to be compelled to take the money back. *hanged himself*. Acts i. 18 gives a different version of Judas' procedure and end, but Matthew's account looks more historical.

Ver. 6. *took*. Possibly they found them some time after lying in the Holy Place, as ver. 5 seems to suggest that Judas threw them in without the priests knowing it, though he might have made so hasty a retreat that he could not be followed. *not lawful*—founding on Deut. xxiii. 18. *the price of blood*. Guilty or innocent—that made no difference to them.

Vers. 7, 8. *the potter's field*. A well-known field belonging to a potter. Some suppose it must have been a worked-out clay bed to be got so cheaply; but it is much more likely that the connection with a potter is due to the following prophecy. *strangers*. Gentiles who died in Jerusalem, less likely foreign Jews, who would get a more decent burial-place. *unto this day*. When the evangelist wrote.

Vers. 9, 10. *Jeremy*. A mistake for Zech. xi. 12, 13, due probably

spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued,  
 10 whom they of the children of Israel did value, and gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me.

to a reminiscence of Jer. xxxii. 6-15, and xviii. 2, 3. The prophecy of Zechariah is very loosely quoted and translated, and the clauses are rearranged. *And they took . . . silver*, for "and I took . . . silver"; *the price of him that was valued*, for "a goodly price" ("goodly" is in Zechariah ironical. Matthew has read the Hebrew words differently). *whom they of the children of Israel did value*, for "that I was prized at of them." "Of them" has been changed into *they of the children of Israel* to fix the guilt of the contemptuous valuation of Christ on the Sanhedrin as the representatives of Israel. *and gave them for the potter's field*, for "and cast them to the potter in the house of the Lord." *Field* is introduced to correspond with the fact of the history. "Potter" in Zechariah should be "treasury," a mistake due to a confusion of the two Hebrew words, which differ only in a single letter. Matthew, reading the word "potter" in Zechariah, called the field "the potter's field." *as the Lord appointed me*, for "and the Lord said to me," Matthew substituting the language of Ex. ix. 12, LXX.

Matthew, or his source, found a striking resemblance between Zech. xi. 12, 13 and the facts. In Zechariah, the prophet, appointed by God shepherd of the people, finding it impossible to please them, gives up the attempt, and asks them for his wage for the services he has rendered. They give him thirty pieces of silver, the price of an injured slave. He is told by God to cast the miserable pittance into the treasury of the temple, a symbol that the service was really God's and that this is the miserable value they put on God's work. The prophecy goes on further to describe the murder of this good shepherd. The prophecy may have slightly coloured the facts in this narrative and the facts may have affected the quotation, but nothing could be a more apt symbolical prophecy of the treatment meted out to Christ, the Good Shepherd, and of the miserable value placed on Him.

## XXVII. 11-14. JESUS BEFORE PILATE.

11 And Jesus stood before the governor: and the governor asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews? And

Ver. 11. *stood*—i.e. as a prisoner before his judge. The time was the early morning, a common time for the Romans to try cases. The place was probably in the palace of Herod. *Art thou*. Thou is emphatic. Pilate is amazed that Jesus should be accused of being a king. Jesus had not the bearing of an imperious aristocrat. *the King of the Jews*. "King Messiah" was probably the actual words they used in their impeachment (cf. Luke xxiii. 2). It was on the ground of His

- 12 Jesus said unto him, Thou sayest. And when he was  
 accused of the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing.  
 13 Then said Pilate unto him, Hearest thou not how many  
 14 things they witness against thee? And he answered him to  
 never a word; insomuch that the governor marvelled greatly.

claim to be Messiah that the Sanhedrin had condemned Him (xxvi. 63-66). But in the Sanhedrin it was the purely religious aspect of the claim which they had in view. Before Pilate they cleverly but basely gave it a political significance, and accused Jesus of high treason against the Emperor. According to the popular Messianic idea, the Messiah was indeed regarded as the antagonist of Cæsar. But they knew that Jesus had abjured politics and recognised the rights of Cæsar (xxii. 17-22). It was, moreover, basely unpatriotic to declare the Messianic hope a crime worthy of death. To get rid of Jesus, they committed national suicide. But the narrative seems to suggest that the lead in the impeachment was taken by the Sadduceic party, who appear to have held no Messianic belief. *Thou sayest.* An indirect affirmative, which would not be decisive to Pilate (cf. n. on xxvi. 25, 64).

Vers. 12-14. *answered nothing.* His silence before Pilate does not mean any disrespect of the Governor, but simply that Pilate would not be able to comprehend His spiritual conception of the Messiah. For His silence before His accusers cf. n. on xxvi. 63. *marvelled.* Such silence in a prisoner was to Pilate unprecedented.

## XXVII. 15-26. JESUS OR BARABBAS.

- 15 Now at that feast the governor was wont to release unto the  
 16 people a prisoner, whom they would. And they had then a

Ver. 15. *at that feast*—or “at each feast.” In either case the Passover is meant. *was wont.* This custom harmonises indeed with the historical associations of the Passover, but is otherwise unknown. It was a custom practised by the Romans at their Feast of the Lectisternium, and it may have been initiated by them in Judæa to popularise their rule.

Ver. 16. *a notable prisoner.* The insurrection in which he had taken a prominent part was probably one of those petty patriotic revolts against the Roman rule common under Pilate, and this would make him a popular hero of the hour. The crime he had committed in the insurrection was probably the murder of some partisans of Rome. But in the Gospels and the Acts it is the preference for a murderer which is the arresting thought. The name Barabbas= “son of the father,” i.e. “of the rabbi” (cf. xliii. 9), may suggest that he was the fallen son of one of the rabbis who had taken to brigandage (cf. John xviii. 40; Acts iii. 14). He may have been a notorious

- 17 notable prisoner, called Barabbas. Therefore, when they were gathered together, Pilate said unto them, Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus which is called  
 18 Christ? For he knew that for envy they had delivered him.  
 19 When he was set down on the judgment seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream

leader of brigands, and the two robbers crucified with Jesus may have belonged to his band and been caught with him in the futile revolt (cf. Mark xv. 7). The evidence is not strong for regarding Barabbas as a proper name.

Vers. 17, 18. *gathered together*. Here the crowd seem gathered in connection with the trial of Jesus, and Pilate raises the question of the special amnesty as a means of escaping from a verdict on Jesus. But he would not then suggest Barabbas as an alternative. The account in Mark xv. 8 is much to be preferred. The crowd gather to ask Pilate to grant the customary release of a prisoner. Pilate jumps at the idea, imagining that Jesus is popular with the crowd, and that they have come to seek His release, and asks them if this is their desire. He would not be astonished if it were; *for he knew that for envy*—i.e. of His popularity, of His influence—*they* (=the Sanhedrists) *had delivered Him*. This knowledge he no doubt got through his officials, whose business it was to watch the movements of so troublesome a people as the Jews. It accounts for his not being impressed by the charge of high treason and by the name king.

There is a fascinating reading here and in ver. 16: "Jesus Barabbas (i.e. "Jesus, the son of the Rabbi") or Jesus who is called Messiah." Though it is not found now in the best MSS, it may have been dropped in early ages out of reverence for Jesus' name, for Origen knew the reading, and rejected it on that account.

Ver. 19. *When he was set down*—"while he was sitting." The suggestion is that while he was giving the people time to make up their minds, a message from his wife was handed to him. Though reported only by Matthew, there is nothing incredible in the incident. It had become the custom for Roman governors to take their wives with them to the provinces. Tradition names her Claudia Procla or Procula, and says she was a proselyte; but that is probably an inference from her sympathy with Jesus in this passage. *nothing to do with*—i.e. nothing to do with any action against Him. *this day*—i.e. this morning. *in a dream*. Nothing supernatural is necessarily implied. *just* (= "righteous") implies that she was impressed by what she had heard about Jesus. Her dream would reflect her anxious thoughts, and possibly the sounds of the tumult going on outside, whether or not her husband was in her dream mixed up in the movement against Jesus. She was consequently seized with superstitious dread when she heard of the trial that was going

20 because of him. But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitude that they should ask Barabbas, and destroy  
 21 Jesus. The governor answered and said unto them, Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you? They said,  
 22 Barabbas. Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ? They all say unto him,  
 23 Let him be crucified. And the governor said, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out the more, saying,  
 24 Let him be crucified. When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water,

on in the palace where she also was. Pilate up to this point, though ready to release Jesus, is rather indifferent to the result. The change in his attitude Matthew probably regards as due to this message.

Ver. 20. The Sanhedrists used the interval which was given the people to make up their minds to move about among them and persuade them to ask Barabbas. This implies that they had not come to ask Barabbas. From Mark we may conclude that even the suggestion of asking Barabbas came from the Sanhedrists. It caught on, as he was a popular hero of the hour. *and destroy Jesus.* Added by Matthew to Mark xv. 11. They may have prepared the people also for the cry in ver. 22.

Vers. 21, 22. *answered and said.* An Hebraic formula = "said," of a saying occasioned by something. *What shall I do.* Pilate is not armed strong with a sense of justice, but seeks to get rid of an encumbrance and find a way out of a perplexing situation. *Christ.* Instead of Mark's "the King of the Jews." In Matthew Pilate does not give the sting which would help to infuriate the crowd, but is rather amazed at the treatment given to one who bore a title which he would have expected the people to honour. *all.* In Mark, simply "they." Matthew would emphasise the universal guilt. No doubt the Sanhedrists started and led the cry. *Let him be crucified.* Contrast the cry of the Galilean pilgrims, "Hosanna!" (xxi. 9). This crowd was possibly largely Judæan, and therefore under the influence of the authorities. But now that Jesus appeared so helpless and discredited, it would only humiliate and enrage them to be taunted with such a Messiah.

The moral weakness of Pilate, who was a haughty and imperious Governor, is only to be understood by the wrongs and cruelties he was guilty of, which made him dread a Jewish appeal to Cæsar. The Sanhedrists knew very well that they were the masters of the situation.

Ver. 23. Pilate partly appeals for justice, which it was his business to see done, and partly seeks to make sure of the popular feeling. *cried out.* Of loud, hoarse cries. *the more*—"beyond measure." Of long-continued cries.

Ver. 24. *a tumult.* A fanatical outburst was the very thing he

and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am  
 25 innocent of the blood of this just person : see ye to it. Then  
 answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and  
 26 on our children. Then released he Barabbas unto them :  
 and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be  
 crucified.

wished to avoid. *washed his hands.* This symbolical act, whereby he thought to free himself of responsibility and cleanse himself of the guilt of Jesus' blood, was a custom of the Romans and Greeks as well as of the Jews. For the Jewish practice cf. Deut. xxi. 6, 8. *this just person.* Recalling his wife's message, and trying in this lame fashion to follow her advice. *see ye to it*—"ye shall see to it." "It is your concern" (cf. ver. 4).

Ver. 25. The people lightly and defiantly undertake to bear the responsibility, fulfilling the prophecy of xxiii. 35 (cf. Jer. li. 35). *all.* Emphasising their universal responsibility for the death of Christ. The curse returned to roost in the siege of Jerusalem, when Josephus, no friend of the Christians, says "space was wanting for the crosses, and crosses for the bodies."

Ver. 26. *scourged.* Criminals condemned to crucifixion were first scourged, according to the cruel Roman practice. The criminal was stripped and tied to a post in a stooping attitude, and scourged from all sides with whips, on the end of which were often fastened leaden balls or sharp-pointed bones. So severe was the scourging that many died under it. To stand it, Jesus must have had a strong physical constitution, and was therefore all the more capable of intense and prolonged suffering. *delivered him.* Into the hands of the soldiers to carry out the crucifixion.

## XXVII. 27-31. THE MOCKERY OF JESUS IN THE BARRACKS.

27 Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the  
 common hall, and gathered unto him the whole band of  
 28 soldiers. And they stripped him, and put on him a scarlet

Ver. 27. The scourging of Jesus was done in the presence of the Governor before the judgment seat, after Pilate had pronounced sentence in the words, "I condemn. You will go to the Cross." *the soldiers of the governor*—i.e. his bodyguard. *the common hall.* The praetorium, the Governor's residence, which some regard as Fort Antonia, at the north-west corner of the temple hill ; but it is more likely to have been the palace of Herod, on the south-west of the temple hill. The scene of judgment would be outside of the palace, and the soldiers would lead Jesus inside the palace into a guard-room. *the whole band.* The maniple of 200 men, less likely the cohort of 600.

Ver. 28. *stripped him.* The better reading is "clothed Him,"

29 robe. And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail,  
 30 King of the Jews! And they spit upon him, and took the  
 31 reed, and smote him on the head. And after that they had mocked him, they took the robe off from him, and put his own raiment on him, and led him away to crucify him.

for He had already been stripped for scourging. They put His clothes on again, with the exception of His upper garment. Instead of that they put on Him a scarlet robe, the soldier's military cloak, the sagum, which was also worn by commanders and conferred as an honour on foreign kings—to deck Him out as a mock king.

Ver. 29. *a crown of thorns*. The thorns must have been found near by, perhaps in Herod's garden. The object was certainly in the first instance caricature, but a certain amount of torture would be involved, even if the softer species of thorn were used, as some think. But even some of the harder species lend themselves to quick weaving, though the hardest might cause delirium or death, and the severity of the scourging is proved by ver. 32, Mark xv. 22. *a reed*. To represent a sceptre. *bowed the knee*. In mock homage.

Ver. 30. The jesting turns into rough horse-play. *spit*. Contemptuous, instead of kissing His hand, the final act of homage to a king. *smote him*. As if repeating the scourging. This mockery and horse-play was contrary to the rules of Roman discipline, but they vented on Him their hatred and contempt of the Jew.

Ver. 31. All this mockery stops when Jesus is led out, because Roman soldiers were forbidden to mock the Jews in public, under penalty of death.

## XXVII. 32-38. THE CRUCIFIXION.

32 And as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon

Ver. 32. *came out*—*i.e.* out of the city. By the law (Num. xv. 35, 36), and also according to the Roman practice, executions must take place outside the city. *found*. Simon, as Mark says, was coming to the city, apparently from work in the fields. *Cyrene*. A native of Cyrene in Libya, in North Africa, where there were many Jews. *compelled*—"impressed" (cf. v. 41). The soldiers would impress him with less compunction because he was a stranger. It was the custom for the condemned to bear his own cross to the place of crucifixion. Opinion is divided as to whether it were the upright or the cross bar which Jesus would have to carry. Jesus probably was worn out with the strain and the scourging, and broke down on the way, as Mark xv. 22 says that the soldiers bore, *i.e.* carried, Him after impressing Simon.

33 by name : him they compelled to bear his cross. And when  
 they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say,  
 34 A place of a skull, they gave him vinegar to drink mingled  
 with gall : and when he had tasted thereof, he would not  
 35 drink. And they crucified him, and parted his garments,  
 casting lots : that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by  
 the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and  
 36 upon my vesture did they cast lots. And sitting down they

Ver. 33. *Golgotha*. An Aramaic word for "skull," so called probably from the rounded contour of the ground. Others think it was the place of execution, and got its name from the skulls of executed criminals, whose bodies would be left to be the prey of beasts and birds. But though that was the Roman custom, burial was required by the law (Deut. xxi. 23). Traditionally it was held to be a knoll, and the Latin for skull is "Calvaria," hence the name Mount Calvary. Its site on the west or north of the city is disputed.

Ver. 34. *vinegar*. Read with the better MSS "wine." *gall*. Instead of Mark's myrrh, under the influence of Ps. lxix. 21, from which also has come the change of "wine" into "vinegar." The ancients loved to mix the wine with myrrh to give it a pleasant flavour. But it was the Jewish custom to give the crucified an intoxicating drink to deaden their sensibility to the pain, following Prov. xxxi. 6, and tradition says that a band of Jerusalem women were wont to do this at their own expense. This is the meaning of the "drugged wine" of Mark, and no doubt here also, though some think that "gall" implies that in Matthew it was given Him as a cruel joke, and that Jesus refused it on account of its disagreeable taste. But it is more probable that Jesus recognised its intoxicating nature, and resolved to die with clear consciousness. It is part of His consistent refusal to escape His appointed suffering.

Ver. 35. *crucified him*—lit. "having crucified Him, they parted." Matthew hurries over the actual crucifixion. He was first stripped naked and bound to the cross-bar, which was then lifted up and fixed on the notch in the upright stake, which was from 7½ to 9 feet high. The hands were then stretched out and nailed to the extremities of the cross-bar. A peg projected from the upright on which the crucified sat to support the weight of the body. The feet were sometimes, but not so often, nailed also. In Christ's case they were probably only tied with cords. The victim died a slow, agonising death, lingering sometimes for days. The garments were the perquisites of the crucifiers. The soldiers, keeping up the sport, divided out the various articles by casting lots—a grim spectacle. *that it . . . lots* is omitted in the best MSS, and probably has been inserted from John xix. 24. The prophecy is Ps. xxii. 18.

Ver. 36. *watched*. The soldiers kept guard till He should die, because they were responsible with their lives for the carrying out of the sentence.



- 37 watched him there ; and set up over his head his accusation written, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.  
 38 Then were there two thieves crucified with him ; one on the right hand, and another on the left.

Ver. 37. *over his head*—i.e. on the projection of the upright stake. The form of Christ's cross was therefore the *crux immissa*, †, not the *crux commissa*, T, which was also common. *his accusation*. Written on a tablet of wood, which was carried in front of the victim, or hung round his neck, as he went to the place of crucifixion, to proclaim to the public what his guilt was. It is not known whether it were the usual custom to fix it on to the cross. Matthew's mention of it, after the sitting down to watch, may imply that it was an additional piece of mockery on the soldiers' part.

#### XXVII. 39-44. TAUNTS AT THE CRUCIFIED.

- 39 And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads,  
 40 and saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come  
 41 down from the cross. Likewise also the chief priests, mock-  
 42 ing him, with the scribes and elders, said, He saved others ; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him  
 43 now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He  
 trusted in God ; let him deliver him now, if he will have him :  
 44 for he said, I am the Son of God. The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth.

Ver. 39. *passed by*. A highway therefore led past Golgotha. *wagging their heads*. A gesture of contempt and malicious joy, as in Ps. xxii. 7.

Ver. 40. The report of the charge made before the Sanhedrin has now spread among the populace. *the Son of God*=the Messiah, as in xxvi. 63.

Ver. 42. *saved others*. It may be an admission of Jesus' beneficent activity, or it may only be ironical. The idea of a Messiah who will not use His power to save Himself is inconceivable to them. *If . . . Israel*. Rather, "He is the King of Israel," ironical. *come down*. The one sign of Messiahship they would believe, quite genuinely meant.

Ver. 43. *He . . . him*. This is not in Mark xv. 32. Matthew has expressed their contempt in the words of Ps. xxii. 8. *if . . . him*—"if he desires him." *for . . . God*. Before the Sanhedrin (xxvi. 64). It is reminiscent of Wis. ii. 18, "For if he is the righteous Son of God, he will deliver him."

Ver. 44. Matthew, following Mark xv. 32, has no knowledge of a penitent thief.

## XXVII. 45-56. THE DEATH OF JESUS.

45 Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land  
 46 unto the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried  
 with a loud voice, saying, Eli! Eli! lama sabachthani? that  
 is to say, My God! My God! why hast thou forsaken me?  
 47 Some of them that stood there, when they heard that, said,  
 48 This man calleth for Elias. And straightway one of them  
 ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it

Ver. 45. *the sixth hour*=noon. *darkness*. Not an eclipse of the sun, because it was the time of full moon. Some think of obscuration due to dense dark clouds, others of the darkness which precedes an earthquake. To the evangelist it would be a supernatural phenomenon, representing the mourning sympathy of Nature. A similar event is represented as occurring at the death of Cæsar. The prophets are fond of depicting darkness as accompanying the day of disaster (cf. Amos viii. 9). *over all the land*. Rather, "over all the earth." The event, no doubt, has been thus exaggerated by the tradition.

Ver. 46. *the ninth hour*. 3 p.m. *cried*. This cry is certainly historical, for no one would have represented Christ as uttering it. The natural objection to it is seen in Luke's omission of the cry, and in the alteration of it in the apocryphal Gospel of Peter into "my power." *Eli . . . sabachthani*. Ps. xxii. 1. Mark's Aramaic "Eloi! Eloi!" Matthew has changed into the Hebrew "Eli! Eli!" probably to make it sound more like Elias, but he has left the last two words in Aramaic. Whether Jesus used Aramaic or Hebrew cannot be decided. In this cry, here as in Mark His last cry, always felt to have something mysterious in it, His Passion reaches its climax. The probability is that He died literally of a broken heart through the intensity of His grief (cf. John xix. 34). The cry means at least that He lost the consciousness of God's presence and help, which had always been His strength and which He had so uniquely and continuously experienced. He sounded the last depths of the sorrow of the human soul. It stands in striking contrast to the martyrs' triumphant joy in their last hours, and suggests that He only fully tasted death.

Ver. 47. *Some of them*. Hardly the soldiers, as Elijah would be unknown to them. Neither does it seem probable that Jews would have misunderstood the name for God, either in Aramaic or Hebrew, though some may have been foreign Jews, who knew neither language. But it is best taken as an intentional perversion, in mockery of His weakness.

Ver. 48. *one of them*. One of the bystanders, not necessarily one of the "some." As the vinegar was the posca, the sour wine, the common drink of the Roman soldiers, it might probably be one of

49 on a reed, and gave him to drink. The rest said, Let be,  
 50 let us see whether Elias will come to save him. Jesus,  
 when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the  
 51 ghost. And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in  
 twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake,  
 52 and the rocks rent; and the graves were opened; and many  
 53 bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the  
 graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and  
 54 appeared unto many. Now when the centurion, and they  
 them, according to Mark's narrative. But Matthew has more likely  
 taken it to be one of the bystanders. The action was certainly due  
 to genuine pity. He thought the cry sprang from the frantic pain  
 of thirst which was one of the worst agonies of crucifixion. *on a*  
*reed*. To reach up to Him. It is not said whether Jesus took it.  
 He was at the last gasp of death, and may have been practically  
 unconscious now.

Ver. 49. In Mark it is the offerer of the drink who speaks to the  
 bystanders, desiring to give Jesus a chance of living till Elijah come  
 to His help, perhaps a well-meaning, kindly, ignorant soldier. Here  
 it is the crowd who object to his kindly action.

Ver. 50. *again*. Referring to ver. 46. *with a loud voice*. A  
 piercing, probably inarticulate, cry of anguish.

Ver. 51. *veil*. Dividing the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies,  
 into which none but the High Priest ever entered. *rent*. Symbolic  
 of the destruction of the old religion that kept men at a distance  
 from the Holiest, and of the free access of all to God through the  
 death of Christ (cf. Heb. x. 10-21; Rom. v. 2). In the Gospel  
 according to the Hebrews it is the lintel of the door of the temple  
 which falls, and so some think it may have been the veil in front  
 of the door of the Holy Place, but that is improbable. There is a  
 passage in the Talmud which speaks of the doors of the temple  
 opening of themselves about this time, and a rabbi thereupon  
 addresses the temple as near its end. This tends to confirm the  
 Gospel account of a startling event occurring in the temple. An  
 earthquake would account for it.

Vers. 52, 53. *and the graves . . . unto many*. Peculiar to Matthew  
 —a tradition which is to be taken as purely legendary, symbolising  
 the communication of life-giving, resurrecting power to the dead  
 through Christ. Tradition went on to embellish the story, naming  
 those who rose Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and so on.

Ver. 54. *centurion*. The Roman officer in charge of the soldiers  
 who crucified Christ. *they that . . . him* = the soldiers. *watching*—  
*i.e.* guarding. *those . . . done*—*i.e.* the striking events accompanying  
 the death of Christ. The editor of the Gospel has substituted these  
 wonders, which he has introduced into the narrative, for Mark's  
 "that he so died."

*they*. Mark, who confines the utterance to the centurion, is to be

that were with him watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying,  
 55 Truly this was the Son of God. And many women were there beholding afar off, which followed Jesus from Galilee,  
 56 ministering unto him: among which was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's children.

preferred. *feared*. Regarding these startling events as due to the anger of the gods. *Son of God*. Having heard of Jesus' claim to be the Son of God, the centurion will mean that He was what He claimed to be. To the centurion that would be a Divine Hero, in the pagan sense of sons of the gods or in some way superhuman.

## XXVII. 57-61. THE BURIAL.

57 When the even was come, there came a rich man of Arimathæa, named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus' disciple :  
 58 he went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. Then  
 59 Pilate commanded the body to be delivered. And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen  
 60 cloth, and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock: and he rolled a great stone to the door

Ver. 57. *even*—i.e. before 6 p.m. The approach of sunset made the action urgent and hurried, as criminals had to be buried before sunset (Deut. xxi. 23). *rich*. An inference probably from Mark's word "honourable," which in vulgar speech meant "rich," but was properly "of good standing"—as Luke xxiii. 50 interpreted it, "a good man and a just." Matthew would also have in view Isa. liii. 9.

*Arimathæa*. The Ramathaim of 1 Sam. i. 1, probably thirteen miles north-east of Lydda, which was eleven miles from Joppa. *Jesus' disciple*. The reason for Joseph's action, an inference probably from Mark's "which also waited for the kingdom of God." He was a secret disciple, according to John xix. 38, a very sympathetic admirer of Jesus, though possibly not fully prepared to follow Him in His Messianic claims.

Ver. 58. *begged the body*. A request was necessary, as the Romans usually allowed the bodies to waste on the cross and be devoured by birds of prey; and so it would have been with Jesus but for Joseph. But it was quite allowable to grant it. Mark's narrative suggests that Joseph was prepared to bribe Pilate, who, however, gave it freely.

Vers. 59, 60. *clean*—i.e. new, unused. *his own*. An addition to Mark's account, but the most natural explanation. *new*. Lately made, and not yet occupied. *in the rock*—i.e. in the side of a rocky

61 of the sepulchre, and departed. And there was Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, sitting over against the sepulchre.

cliff. Tombs in the cliffs round Jerusalem were common. *a great stone*. A common way of closing the graves of the rich.

Ver. 61. *the other Mary*. Naturally, with reference to ver. 56, Mary, the mother of James and Josés. *sitting over against*. They had followed Joseph from Calvary, and had sat down to watch the burial, and remained there after Joseph left. This beautiful devotion all through is rewarded (xxviii. 1-10).

### XXVII. 62-66. THE WATCH AT THE GRAVE.

62 Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the  
63 chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, saying,  
Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet  
64 alive, After three days I will rise again. Command therefore  
that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his  
disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto  
the people, He is risen from the dead : so the last error shall  
65 be worse than the first. Pilate said unto them, Ye have a  
66 watch : go your way, make it as sure as ye can. So they  
went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and  
setting a watch.

This story, inserted here into Mark's narrative, and running on through chap. xxviii., may have arisen as a refutation of a story that His disciples stole the body, circulated by the Jews to explain away the Resurrection. It appears with accretions of marvel in the apocryphal Gospel of Peter.

Vers. 62, 63. *that . . . preparation*. A peculiar periphrasis for the Sabbath, due to Mark xv. 42. *we remember*. Not consistent with the Gospel account that Jesus made the prophecy of His Resurrection not in public but only to His disciples (cf. xvi. 21). Despite the prophecy, even His disciples and Mary were not expecting Him to rise (cf. Luke xxiv. 11). How much less would the chief priests and Pharisees expect it !

Vers. 64-66. *the last*—i.e. the belief in His Resurrection. *the first*—i.e. the belief in His Messiahship.

*Ye have*. Rather, "take." *sealing the stone*. By running a string across the stone and sealing it at the two ends where it was fixed to the cliff.

## XXVIII. 1-8. THE ANGEL AT THE OPEN GRAVE.

- 1 IN the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other  
 2 Mary to see the sepulchre. And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door,  
 3 and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and  
 4 his raiment white as snow: and for fear of him the keepers  
 5 did shake, and became as dead men. And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye; for I know  
 6 that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here; for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord  
 7 lay: and go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into  
 8 Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you. And

Ver. 1. *In the end of the Sabbath*—"late on the Sabbath." Here the day is reckoned from sunrise to sunrise, not according to the Jewish mode, from sunset to sunset. In Mark they come to anoint the body, but the editor of this Gospel has substituted *to see the sepulchre*, because the guard, which he has introduced, has made an attempt to anoint the body impossible.

Ver. 2. An earthquake, after the earthquake of xxvii. 51, especially as it does not open the grave, but appears a mere accompaniment of the angel's coming, looks like a legendary setting of the story. The angel seems the interpretation put on Mark's young man, probably meant to explain Mark's statement that the women found that the stone was rolled away. There was a tendency to refer to supernatural agency a thing which could not be understood. *sat upon it*. As a guard. In Matthew he is outside the sepulchre; in Mark he is inside it.

Vers. 3, 4. The customary way of describing a Divine appearance (cf. Dan. vii. 9, x. 6; Matt. xvii. 2). Ver. 4 describes its usual effect on men (cf. Rev. i. 17). *dead*. Stupefied and paralysed, explaining why they offered no resistance.

Ver. 5. *ye*. Emphatic, as opposed to the guard. *for I know*. The reason why the sight of the angel should not paralyse them with fear, because they are loving friends of Jesus.

Ver. 6. *He . . . risen*. The striking words in which all the three evangelists agree. There was nothing less expected by the women. *as he said*. Added by Matthew, as by Luke, to Mark xvi. 6.

Vers. 7, 8. *goeth . . . Galilee*. Cf. n. on xxvi. 32. The natural meaning is, "when you come to Galilee, you will find that He

they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy, and did run to bring his disciples word.

is there before you." *with fear*. Because they had been in the presence of the supernatural, which always inspires awe (cf. Rev. i. 17). *great joy*. Because the tidings were so gladdening and so unexpected. *run . . . word*. Exactly the contrary of Mark xvi. 8.

## XXVIII. 9, 10. THE APPEARANCE OF JESUS TO THE WOMEN.

9 And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail! And they came and held him by  
10 the feet, and worshipped him. Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me.

Ver. 9. *held him by the feet*. The sudden rush of uncontrollable love on seeing Him, combining with the impulse of adoration which is regularly expressed by prostration.

Ver. 10. A repetition of the angel's message with the significant words *my brethren*. The Risen Lord retains the feelings of a brother towards His disciples (cf. Rom. viii. 29). The identity of this message with the angel's message makes it seem probable that both are varying traditions of the same event, Mark's young man being explained by the one tradition as an angel and by the other as Jesus Himself.

## XXVIII. 11-15. THE BRIBING OF THE GUARD.

11 Now when they were going, behold, some of the watch came into the city, and showed unto the chief priests all the things  
12 that were done. And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto  
13 the soldiers, saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and  
14 stole him away while we slept. And if this come to the  
15 governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you. So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and

Ver. 13. But how could they know that it was the disciples who did it, if they were sleeping?

Ver. 14. *this*=your sleeping. Death was the penalty for a soldier's sleeping at his post. *come . . . ears*. Better, "come to a trial before the governor." *persuade*—i.e. appease him by a bribe or by some other means.

this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.

Ver. 15. *this day*. When the evangelist wrote. Justin Martyr (145-162 A.D.) and Tertullian (150-220 A.D.) are acquainted with this Jewish explanation of the Resurrection as a theft of the body.

## XXVIII. 16, 17. THE APPEARANCE OF JESUS IN GALILEE.

16 Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a  
17 mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted.

Ver. 16. *went away*. Here because of the women's message, in order to see the Lord (vers. 7, 10). *mountain . . . appointed them*. Either "had appointed to them as a meeting-place," which is best, or "had appointed them apostles." Some think of the Mount of Transfiguration, others of the mountain where the Sermon on the Mount was preached. It is best taken of the mountainous district of Galilee. For mountain=high hilly land cf. v. 1. The appointment is best taken as that made in the women's message.

Ver. 17. *saw him*. The implication is for the first time. *some doubted*. Some take this of others than the Eleven, but there is no hint of any being present but the Eleven. It seems, then, to be a limitation of *they worshipped him*, implying that some of the Eleven were doubtful when He first appeared to them (cf. Luke xxiv. 37; John xx. 24, 25). Vers. 16, 17, however, give a general summary of the appearance of the Risen Lord in Galilee, and of its varying general effect, rather than a definite case of such appearance.

## XXVIII. 18-20. THE LAST COMMISSION OF THE RISEN LORD.

18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is

Ver. 18. *all . . . earth*. This is essentially a heightened repetition and confirmation of xi. 27, on which see notes. *Is given*—lit. "was given"—dates the gift back to a past act of God, as in xi. 27, where it means preceding God's sending Him on His mission. That also must be its meaning here, but it is here spoken by the Risen Lord, and the Resurrection is therefore a confirmation and consequence of that gift, not the conferring of it. "All power in heaven and in earth" is equivalent to "King, not in name but in reality, of the kingdom of God," which embraces the heavenly and the earthly spheres, *i.e.* the whole cosmos that is. The thought is that Jesus is on the throne of the cosmos, rather than that He has



19 given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, 20 and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost ; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you : and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

ascended to it. "All power" essentially means, as in xi. 27, "all power in the kingdom of God" ; but that does not mean exclusive of nature and providence. Rather it means that He wields the power which controls and governs all things, including nature and providence, as they affect the life and destiny of man.

Ver. 19. *Go*. The command to missionise the whole world of man is given by its King. *teach*—"make disciples of" ; the work of the evangelist, not of the teacher. *baptizing*. A better reading is, "having baptized." Christian baptism, requiring as its condition repentance, and implying faith in Christ, and symbolising the forgiveness of sins through Christ, was the rite by which one became a disciple and entered the Christian Society. It is not spoken of as a rite which followed the being made a disciple, else we should have had, "and having made disciples, baptize them." It is the condition on the fulfilment of which a disciple is made, but made in the sense of entering on the life of discipleship. It is the first, the essentially religious, condition of being made of a disciple. The second, the ethical, condition of discipleship follows in ver. 20. *in the name*—"into the name." "The name of the Father, etc.," is an Hebraic way of saying, "the Father, etc.," as He has been revealed. "Into" describes the result of baptism, the relation to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit into which they are brought by baptism. The relation is one of fellowship, dependence, and, following from that, obedience.

Eusebius of Cæsarea (c. 265-340 A.D.) often quotes this verse, but always in the form, "Go ye therefore and make disciples of all the nations in my name," omitting "having baptized . . . Ghost." All existing MSS and versions give it as in the text, but they probably all represent a text later than the time of Eusebius. No satisfactory explanation has been given of the Eusebian form of quotation except that it was the original text of Matthew as known to Eusebius. "Having baptized . . . Ghost" would then be a later interpolation, supplanting "in my name." This would also explain very simply why baptism occurs here with the Trinitarian formula, while in Acts it is always baptism in or into the name of Christ, or a similar form of expression. At the same time, Father, Son, Holy Spirit are already in the N.T. distinct conceptions, so that this Trinitarian baptismal formula, though it is an advance in expression on the original baptismal formula, is not an advance in thought.

Ver. 20. *teaching*. A work which continues to the end. *observe . . . you*. Because a disciple is not one who merely confesses Christ, but one who does the will of God revealed by Christ (cf. vii. 21).

Knowledge is of course implied in teaching, but the stress is laid on practice. But only what Christ has commanded is to be laid on men. *I am with you.* The comforting promise of the continuous spiritual presence of the Risen Lord, the Ruler of the world of men, guiding, protecting, and upholding them in their work (cf. xviii. 20; Acts xviii. 10). *always*—"all the days." No day without Him. *the end of the world*—"the consummation of the age." The thought is not of the destruction of the material world, but of the inauguration of the kingdom at the coming of the Son of Man in His glory, which will be the consummation, and thereby the close of the current order of things.

As vers. 16, 17 are a summary of the appearances of the Risen Lord to His disciples in Galilee, so vers. 18-20, which are special to Matthew, the existing conclusion of Mark not being its original ending, are in their present form to be regarded as a summary of the Lord's last instructions to them. Some think they are the expression of what the Early Church came, under the leading of the Spirit, to recognise as her Lord's will. But the charge is already found in the body of the Gospel (ver. 18 in xi. 27; ver. 19a in xxiv. 14, xxvi. 13; ver. 20 in v. 19, xviii. 20). What the Master had already taught they came clearly to understand and recognise as the will of Him who spoke from heaven. Even the words in which they express it are essentially His.

## APPENDIX.

### NOTE A.

#### THE PHARISEES AND THE SADDUCEES.

THE Pharisees were essentially a religious party, fanatically opposed to whatever was non-Jewish. Their leading aim was to keep themselves separate from everything that would defile them. Hence their name, Pharisees=the Separated Ones. This purity and holiness they sought to attain by the most rigorous and scrupulous observance of the written law and the unwritten traditions down to the smallest minutiae. Most of the rabbis and scribes, the professional students and expounders of the law, belonged to this party. The Pharisees sprang from the people, were justly revered by them, and had the greatest influence over them. But they were theocratic in their conception of life rather than democratic. They had no true sympathy with the people as struggling souls. Their interests lay rather in binding the yoke of the law upon them and compelling them to obedience. This they did from zeal for the glory of God, with the idea, however, dominant in their minds that they thus acquired merit in God's eye, and would gain high rewards in the coming kingdom, which they looked upon as the political as well as the religious supremacy of the Jews over the world. They were the soul of the opposition to Jesus, opposing Him on national and religious grounds.

Their spirit is characterised by Jesus as hypocrisy, *i.e.* the spirit of untruthfulness in religion and life. This hypocrisy was, however, largely unconscious. They had not always been untruthful, but had come to be so, setting the letter above the spirit, cultivating the form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.

The Sadducees, the other great Jewish party, were essentially a political party. They were largely indifferent to religion and to what was distinctively Jewish. Worldly power was their aim, and secular comfort contented them. They were the ruling aristocratic party, to which most of the priests belonged, and formed the majority of the Sanhedrin. Their name is probably derived from Zadok, priest in the days of David and Solomon, whose descendants

formed the bulk of the priests. They seem to have left Jesus alone until at the close He drove the money-changers out of the temple and appeared to claim to be the Messiah. The real ground of their opposition was probably political, a fear that His ascendancy as Messiah would lead to their displacement. After the destruction of the city and the temple, their *raison d'être* ceased, and they disappeared as a party. Their spirit was the spirit of secularism.

## NOTE B.

### THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

Jesus' teaching is centred on the thought of the kingdom of God, which is usually called in Matthew the kingdom of heaven for the reason given in note on iii. 2. The thought of it swings in the Gospels between the idea that the coming of the Son of Man upon the clouds, *i.e.* in a transcendent way, in power and glory full displayed, is the beginning of the kingdom, complete at this its first institution, all that precedes being the preparation for its coming, and the idea that the kingdom is already present in the world and grows to a final consummation at the coming of the Son of Man upon the clouds. The former view is prevalent in Matthew, the latter is seen, *e.g.*, in Matt. xii. 28, the Parables of the Tares and the Drag-net (Matt. xiii. 24-30, 47-50), the Parables of the Mustard Seed and the Leaven (Matt. xiii. 31-33), and unmistakably in the Parable of the Seed growing secretly (Mark iv. 26-29).

Three points are to be noted: (1) Jesus was conscious that the kingdom was come into the world in and with Himself (cf. xii. 28). (2) He held to the idea, inherited from the past, that the kingdom would come perfectly only when the Son of Man came in a transcendent way upon the clouds, but He regarded this coming in glory as destined to take place after His death. (3) He looked at the kingdom from a religious standpoint. It is founded by God from all eternity (cf. xxv. 34), and therefore has no growth nor history, which can only be predicated of earthly things. It is not something which is produced by man, evolved by the ethical struggles of human activity; it is a transcendent eternal life which comes down from above. When a man enters into it, he is raised above the world, where alone there is history, into the sphere of God, into the life of the Eternal.

### *The Religious Essence of the Conception.*

On Jesus' lips the kingdom of God means essentially the rule of God, the spiritual forces and laws by which God rules. It is thus invisible and eternal. It exists in the present in the world when the soul of a man is ruled by God. The kingdom is not, however,

the mere equivalent of the doing of God's will. It is the power of God in the soul, both requiring the doing of His will and making it possible. "Thy kingdom come" and "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven," are two separate petitions. When the kingdom is come, His will shall be done, and the doing of His will is the task imposed by the gift of the kingdom. The kingdom is thus essentially a religious and not an ethical conception, though it is ethically conditioned. It requires the forgiveness of sins on the one hand and the practice of righteousness on the other, but it is itself really a life in fellowship with God, the soul in God and God in the soul. It is received as a gift from God (Luke xii. 32); it is never produced by human effort nor earned by human merit. It expands like a grain of mustard seed as more souls surrender themselves to God, and it penetrates inwardly like leaven as more of a man's being comes under His influence. Its expansion and penetration, however, are due to its own inherent energy. It does not come into existence when a man surrenders himself to God. It exists already, and a man enters into it as into a higher world of spiritual forces, which lay hold of the man as he enters into it and transform his being. At the same time strenuous effort is required to seek it (Matt. vi. 33) and to strive to enter it (Matt. vii. 13, 14; Luke xiii. 24). A soul also stumbles upon it unexpectedly, as on treasure hid in a field, or on a pearl of great price; and when it requires the sacrifice of all that a man hath, it is worth it. For it is the highest good, life eternal.

### *The Social Aspect of the Kingdom.*

While the kingdom is essentially a religious life, it has a social side, we may even say a socialistic. It is not only inward life and inward happiness in God: it is also a system of happy human relationships and a happy outward condition of things. Its coming is the banishment of sin and misery, individual and social, material and spiritual. There is neither rich nor poor in it in the ordinary sense of these words. Divine life and love are the common possession of all, and these are not limited in amount. The only limitation lies in the capacity to receive them. Life is graded in the kingdom, but it is graded according to capacity and character, and the greatest in it, the nearest to God, is the humblest, the best lover and minister of his God and his brothers.

The Messianic kingdom was popularly contrasted with the great pagan world-empires; and though held to be different in character from them, it was yet conceived of as a visible political kingdom on the earth. Jesus severed the idea from all its political aspect. Not only did He disown the use of force, but He would not have any government of man by man, for the working out of man's will (Matt. xxiii. 10). All the citizens of the kingdom stand on one and the same level of brotherhood, ruled by the one Master,

God or Christ. The social life of the kingdom is a life of love and service, and the place where it is to be displayed is uniformly regarded as the earth. It will be perfectly displayed when the Son of Man comes upon the clouds. But even before that consummation love and service are to be the laws of life for Christ's disciples. Though only those who have the spirit of sonship towards God are truly brothers (Matt. v. 47), it is required of His disciples that they act as brothers towards all irrespective of their moral character (Matt. v. 43-48).

In such passages, indeed, as the Parables of the Tares and the Drag-net, the kingdom is viewed as a society already existing mixed of good and evil persons. This lends itself easily to the idea of the Church, but it is certainly not in the Church as a visible institution that men are so bound up together that separation would hurt the good. It is only in human society that their roots are so entwined, and only there that they grow up together. The organised Church is one embodiment of the social life of the kingdom, but the good and bad in it are rather an example of the way in which children of the kingdom and children of the wicked one are temporarily mixed up. The Messianic view of Jesus seems to point to a new human society as the embodiment of the social principles of the kingdom. If the word Church were used in the wide sense of a human society, at once a temple of God and a brotherhood of man, we should have, we think, the conception of Christ.

The kingdom is already come as a spiritual power (Matt. xii. 28). It has also already a social activity, so inextricably bound up with present human society that good and bad appear within the sphere of its activity (Matt. xiii. 24-30, 37-43). The bad are not spiritually within the kingdom, but are so within the social sphere of its activity that they can hurt the good, keep them down, and can be said to be gathered out of it when the final separation comes. Human society is not the kingdom, but it is the social sphere of its activity. In harmony with this view, Christ's disciples are regarded as the salt of the earth and the light of the world. Their function is to enlighten and leaven the whole community.

### *The Eschatological Aspect of the Kingdom.*

We have seen that the kingdom is viewed as already come and destined to grow and spread and penetrate both the individual and society. But side by side with this runs another conception. It has yet to come. It is not the consummation reached after a process of growth, but a sudden intervention of a catastrophic nature. The Son of Man will come upon the clouds. There will be a great judgment, and thereafter the kingdom will be inaugurated on the earth. Its advent too is near. It will come in the lifetime of Jesus' contemporaries, but after the death of Jesus. This aspect

is not to be dismissed as a mere piece of Jewish apocalyptic. It runs through the Gospels, though it is more dwelt upon towards the close. The disciples were taught to pray and be ready for its coming. The essential idea of it must go back to Jesus, is vital to His thought, though all the details may not spring from Him.

We can understand how the kingdom may be present and yet to come. It is an ideal. But that is not the vital idea in this apocalyptic view. It is a religious conception. In such apocalyptic imagery spiritual truth is indeed represented symbolically, though the symbolism is rather unconscious than literary. It springs from a vivid religious imagination, and expresses this dominant truth, that the kingdom is a transcendental eternal life. It comes down always from above. It is never the product of man's effort. It springs from God's creative power. It is eternal life freely given by God and freely received by man. Its spiritual and social forces are at work in the world in and through the men who have received it. All their struggles and the struggles of the forces antagonistic to the kingdom work up to a climax. But both in its present preparatory stage, where it is always coming, and at its final climax, when it is come in power and glory full displayed, it is a descent from above. Man lives and rises by receiving from God what He has already from all eternity prepared for him. It is the destiny of man coming to meet Him, as to man looking forward it is the aim and purpose of his life. The ascent of man is by the descent of God to him, by the lift up of everlasting arms.

## NOTE C.

### THE SON OF MAN.

"The Son of man" was Jesus' favourite designation of Himself. In Hebrew "son of man" is a common way of saying "man" (cf. Ps. viii. 4 and Ezek. *passim*). In Aramaic it is regularly so used. But in the Gospels "the Son of man" is a name for the Messiah; only it expresses on Jesus' lips a distinctive conception of the Messiah.

The use of this title for the Messiah springs from Dan. vii. 13. There Daniel sees "one like unto a son of man," to whom the kingdom is given after the destruction of the four great beasts preceding. The contrast is between the human and the bestial. Through the overthrow of the powers which rule by brute force, in the triumph of the human, the kingdom of God comes. In this vision the figures are all symbolic. The figure "like unto a son of man" represents Israel, "the saints of the Most High" (Dan. vii. 18). It is not the name of an individual, but the description of the humanness of Israel, in virtue of which she will attain the sovereignty of the world.

But already in apocalyptic literature there are traces of the identification of Daniel's mysterious figure with the Messiah. It was not, however, a familiar name for the Messiah in Jesus' time. It had at most, as Holtzmann says, "a sort of still life" till Jesus took it up. Indeed, it seems to have scarcely even suggested the Messiah to the common mind. For even though it were held that "the Son of man" is inserted by Matthew in xvi. 13 into the original question of Jesus as given in Mark viii. 27, Jesus had frequently called Himself "the Son of man," and yet it was only at Cæsarea Philippi that Jesus' Messiahship was explicitly revealed to Peter (Matt. xvi. 16, 17).

Jesus chose the title as peculiarly fitted to express His Messianic consciousness of Himself. He knew Himself to be the Messiah, but a Messiah so different from the popular conception that He avoided the common names "Messiah," "Son of David," "Son of God," as liable to misconceptions. For they had all political and worldly associations, which He disowned. His kingdom was spiritual. Its motive power was not force, but love. He was always struggling with the limitations of Jewish conceptions, and chose rather to let His Personality produce its own impression. At the same time He was bound to make His relation to the past clear. He was the fulfiller of Israel's past, the embodiment of her ideal, and in endeavouring to explicate His relation to her Messianic hope He chose the title "the Son of man" to express *par excellence* His Messianic consciousness.

The name is not indeed an exhaustive definition of His consciousness of Himself. It emphasises His humanness and His sovereignty, the destined sovereignty of the perfectly human.

1. It denotes the essentially *spiritual* nature of His Messiahship. He is King, unrecognised and not yet ascended to the throne, but it is over the spirit of man that He is to rule. His sovereignty is personal and spiritual, not worldly and political. It is the sovereignty of the perfectly human. He is called as the Son of Man to live the perfectly human life, to reveal the ideal for man, the ideal which is known only to God. Once lived and seen on the earth, this ideal embodied in Him is destined to rule man's spirit; for He is not son of Jew nor son of Gentile, but son of man. His sovereignty is universal because He embodies the spiritual ideal of man as man. But this ideal is thoroughly human. The Son of man comes eating and drinking, living the common life of humanity, unlike John, who held himself aloof, severing himself from the common needs of man in his austere life, as though it were a degradation to eat and drink and be a man.

2. It is a title of *dignity*, not of humiliation.

It is as the Son of man that He possesses power on earth to forgive sins (ix. 6), that He is Lord even of the Sabbath (xii. 8), that He shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels (xvi. 27). His vocation as the Son of man is the vocation of the King of men. But the peculiarity of His sovereignty is that He conquers not by



the sword, not by force, but by the love which stoops to serve, to sacrifice, to suffer. "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many" (xx. 28). "Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them" (xvii. 12).

This life of sacrificial service compels Him indeed to live the most unprivileged of lives. "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." But this want of privilege is the penalty of an unique privilege, the penalty of being the King of men. The paradox is that the lowliest is the highest, the servant of all is the king of all, the way to the throne of humanity is the Cross. There is indeed a humiliation in His present lot. The contrast between this homeless, wandering life, with its hard struggle against adversity, and what He really is, gives a biting edge to His experience. "The pathos of His situation is not that of a poor man, but that of a disinherited King" (Denney), or rather that of a King who is kept out of His inheritance. He lives the life of the outcast, who has nothing in common with others but his humanity; yet He is not a King cast out, but rather a King who has not got in. Even so, this way of the Cross is the way by which alone He can gain the kingdom. As the Son of man He must pass this way, but it is a glorious destiny to which it leads Him. He knows that, and knows that nothing can defeat the destiny of the Son of man to be raised to the throne.

3. The view of the Messiah embodied in the title, the Son of man, is from centre to circumference *religious*. It is religious not only because the Son of man comes down from above, but because He looks up to God and lives by faith in God. God is the motive and the guide of His every thought and action. To be perfectly human is to hear, trust, and obey implicitly the call of God at every moment, to live the life of absolute dependence on God. He is King of men not merely because He serves men more than all others, but because He is obedient to God, under authority to God, as none other is. He is ruled by God, and through Him God will rule men. Thus faith in the Son of man, the Representative of God, is faith in God; obedience to Him is obedience to God, and this obedience of faith is the way by which man reaches his spiritual ideal. It is the strait gate and the narrow way which leadeth unto life.

As the Son of man, therefore, Jesus holds an unique place in humanity. While it describes Him in terms of His vocation and not in terms of His nature, the uniqueness of His vocation and of His power to realise it rests inevitably on the uniqueness of His Personality. The cardinal question was for Jesus, "Whom say ye that I am?" (xvi. 15). Faith in His Messiahship, implying the uniqueness of His Personality, is the indestructible power of the Christian society (xvi. 18).

## NOTE D.

## THE SON OF GOD.

*(1) As applied to Men.*

Israel as a nation was first called the son of God, as it is clearly expressed in Ex. iv. 22 : "Israel is my son, my first-born." The very word first-born indicates that other nations also may be sons of God : that Israel in relation to them is the first-born, occupying the rank and entitled to the privileges of the eldest son. What is essentially thought of, when Israel is called the son of God, is not the Divine descent of Israel, but that she is the peculiar object of God's love. The idea of descent from God is not, however, alien to the expression, for God is spoken of as the Father of Israel in the sense of being her Creator. But what is directly in view is not the origin of Israel, but her relation to God.

Though it is the nation which is regarded as being the son of God, there is abundant evidence in the O.T., and not in the lyrical psalms alone, that the individual Israelite felt himself personally related to God, as a son to a Father. Still he only felt so as being a member of the nation. Cut off from his race, he felt cut off from God. It was through the national consciousness that his faith in his personal standing with God was mediated to him and sustained.

In the Synoptic Gospels the individual as a disciple of Jesus is called a son of God. The filial relationship to God depends now not on membership in Israel nor in any society, but on the filial disposition of the individual, on his ethical likeness to God, on spiritual affinity of nature. Out of this consciousness of being the sons of God springs the consciousness of being brothers to one another. Those outside the circle of Jesus' discipleship, inasmuch as they do not know God as their Father and do not possess the filial disposition, are not either sons of God or brothers of the disciples. It is none the less required of disciples that they act towards them as brothers, because God acts as a Father towards them, on the principle of universal love, irrespective of their moral character (v. 43-48). The disciples themselves, however, though really sons of God so far as they are like Him and are impelled to act on the motive of love, are not perfect sons until they are perfect in love as their Father in heaven is.

*(2) As applied to Jesus by Men.*

The title "the Son of God" as applied by others in the Synoptic Gospels to Jesus is a name for "the Messiah." Already in 2 Sam. vii. 14 the king of Israel is called the son of God. This thought, developing along the peculiar Messianic line, culminates in Ps. ii. 7,

from which the title "the Son of God" for "the Messiah" comes. It is the Messiah who is there spoken of, and the day in which He ascends the throne of His world-wide dominion is the day when He is begotten. It is not the deification of a man, the divinity of the Messiah, or His descent from God, which is there in view, but His peculiar relation to God as Messiah. This relationship is originated by God on the day of His coronation. "Son" there signifies the exceptional love with which the Messiah is regarded by God, a love which makes Him the King of men, the Heir of God's sovereignty over man.

In the Synoptic Gospels, when Jesus is called the Son of God by others, the Messiah is meant. In Luke i. 35 the title is used in connection with the supernatural birth. That makes the term express the idea of descent from God: but this is exceptional, and will be due to later influence, an influence which, as we think, was justified.

### (3) *In Jesus' Own Consciousness.*

Jesus indeed never directly calls Himself by this full title, but He does think of Himself as the Son of God in a sense in which it cannot be predicated of any other. The Messianic significance of the title is seen in such a parable as Matt. xxi. 33-46, where He speaks of Himself as the Son and Heir in contrast to others who are but servants. But He preferred the title Son of Man when describing His Messianic vocation. "Son of God" describes rather His religious consciousness of His personal relation to God, which He clearly felt to be unique.

Matt. xi. 27 is the *locus classicus*, though what is there clearly enunciated is implicit throughout the Gospel, where He frequently speaks of "my Father" and "your Father" but never of "our Father." In Matt. xi. 27 He is conscious of being the Mediator to man of the perfect knowledge of God, and this rests on the perfect spiritual sympathy and mutual understanding which subsist between the Father and the Son. His knowledge of God comes to Him by direct intuition. For all other sons it is mediated through Him. Their filial consciousness is derived from Him. They know God as His Father, inferring from the Son what their Father-God is. His filial consciousness is original, not derivative.

Nowhere does He speak of the origin of His sonship. He betrays no consciousness of its beginning. Matt. xxii. 41-46 shows that the question of His descent was in His mind. He does not there deny Davidic descent, but He does imply that, inasmuch as He is David's Lord, He is descended from a Higher Source than David.

While we cannot say that He definitely spoke of Himself as descended from God, that is the impression He produces and the necessary inference of His implications. In later times "the Son of God" was taken simply to mean descended from God, and it

is hard to see that this was not justified by the consciousness of Jesus.

In reading the Gospel we have to bear in mind the reticence of Jesus, and remember that while on the lips of others "the Son of God" would mean in Jesus' lifetime "the Messiah," with some vague feeling of religious awe produced by His Personality, it signified in Jesus' own consciousness more than the Messiah as described in the O.T. It expressed His unique religious consciousness, His unique personal relation to God. The very reticence of Jesus will spring from the sacredness of the inmost sanctuary of His soul, and the impossibility of our understanding a relationship of which we can have no experience. Our belief in the Divinity of Christ rests essentially on our experience that He does reveal to us the Fatherhood of God, bring us to our Father, evoke and maintain in us the filial consciousness, as no other does. The effect He produces in us corresponds with His own consciousness of Himself, and His origin must also correspond with this unique consciousness.

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